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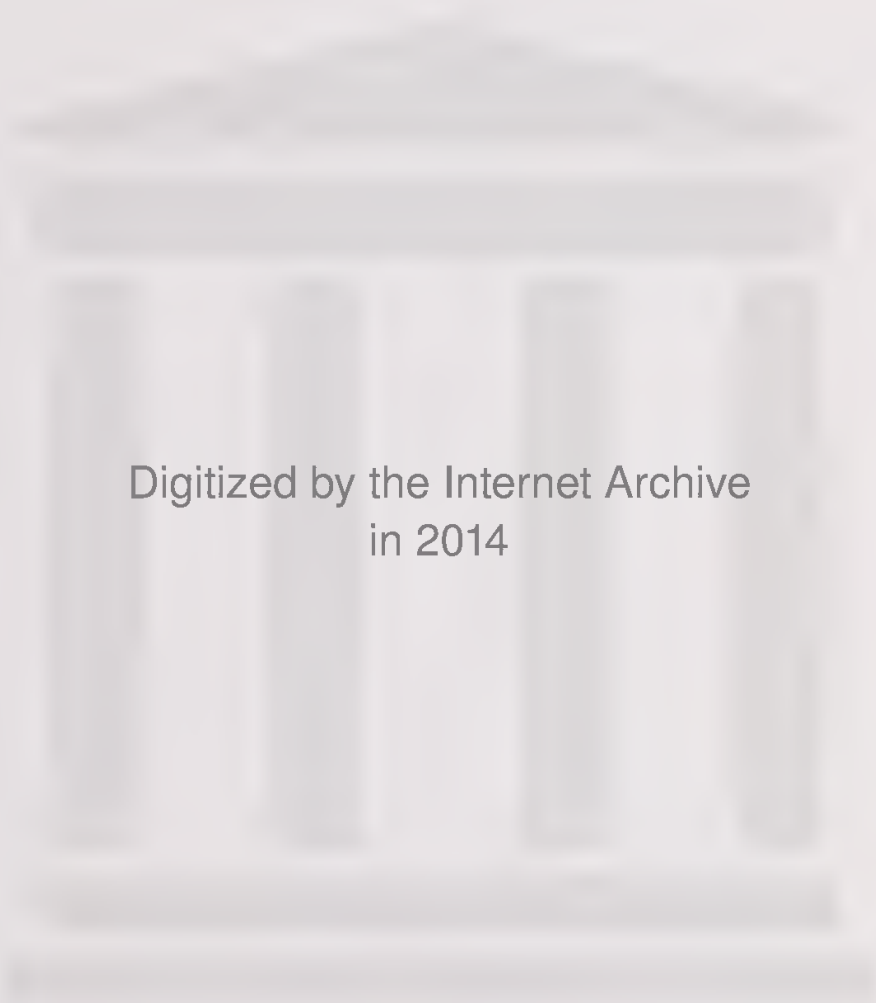
The works of Bishop Sherlock



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THE WORKS

OF

BISHOP SHERLOCK.

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE,

SUMMARY OF EACH DISCOURSE, NOTES, &c.

BY THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B.D.

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MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS.

SUMMARY.

THE dean expresses great concern at the bishop's charge of calumny; takes comfort from the reasons given for the charge; repeats the passage on which this charge was fixed; shows, 1. that the instance was proper, and gives his lordship's own account of the occasion of his assertion: this stated to be an instance of those extremes into which the bishop often runs through opposition: 2. that the words quoted are his lordship's own words: 3. that as they make an intire proposition of themselves, so do they contain truly the whole of what he asserts, exclusive of his reasons for it: 4. that there is nothing left out that can alter the proposition. The interpretation given by the bishop to his own words transcribed: the point on which his defence turns shown to be wrongly taken. He that says, the example of Christ is very fit to be proposed to slaves says what is very true; but he that says, it is more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves than subjects, says what will appear to be very false and shocking to a Christian: this point enlarged on and explained. Enough has been said to justify the fairness of the dean's quotation; but the bishop has more complaints; is very angry with the dean for saying that his assertion will make the ears of a Christian tingle. The dean goes on to show that the assertion is as bad as those words of his represent it to be. He first shows what the assertion amounts to, by giving the bishop's explication of the terms slaves and subjects. The proposition which his lordship had to answer was, that the example of Christ is more

peculiarly fit to be recommended to subjects considered as such, than to slaves. He undertakes to maintain the very contrary. This assertion is declared by the dean to be shocking to a Christian, as being dishonorable to our Saviour. The bishop's reasons for his assertion, viz. that the New Testament represents the humiliation and low estate of Christ by the condition of slaves, are equally bad and dishonorable to our Saviour. His reasons taken in order. First, that which is founded on St. Peter's expressly proposing the example of our blessed Lord to slaves: this refuted at length. Secondly, that in mentioning and handling the duties of civil subjects, neither St. Peter nor any other Apostle ever once proposes the example of Christ's passive submission and non-resistance. This allowed; but if the example of Christ was not proposed to subjects as such, it will not aid his lordship's assertion. Thirdly, that the New Testament itself represents the humiliation and low estate of Christ in this world, by the condition of slaves, &c.: this shown to be false from St. John xiii. 3. 4. 13. 14. 16.; from St. Matt. xx. 27. 28.; from Phil. iii. 10. It is shown that neither Christ's sufferings, nor his trial, nor his birth and lineage, represent the condition of a slave. Fourthly, that our Lord voluntarily put himself into that low and oppressed condition, accounting it not his infamy, but his glory; and that St. Paul particularly makes it his great reward. The celebrated passage of St. Paul, Phil. ii. 5-10. commented on, and shown not to favor the bishop's assertion. After a careful consideration of this matter, the dean still considers his lordship's proposition as very shocking, and destitute of all support. The state and condition of our blessed Lord still farther considered. Before he dismisses this subject, the dean notices the author of a letter in the Flying Post, Jan. 18, who taxes his representation of the bishop as hard and cruel. This charge refuted by a farther consideration of his lordship's proposition. Examples given of the extremes into which the

bishop runs through opposition. Instance of a calumnious charge made by the bishop against the dean, as having acted in Convocation for the purpose of maintaining some private trust reposed in him: this charge indignantly repelled. Conclusion.

THE CONDITION

AND EXAMPLE OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR VINDICATED: IN ANSWER TO THE BISHOP OF BANGOR'S CHARGE OF CALUMNY AGAINST THE DEAN OF CHICHESTER.

SHOULD I pretend to say that I received his lordship's denunciation in the newspaper of a Charge of Calumny without concern, I should deny the truth; for though I well knew that I had given no just occasion for so foul an imputation, yet I knew also that his lordship's kind endeavors to blacken my reputation would not be altogether ineffectual.

Indeed I was much affected with it, and am so still; though his lordship's declaration of the reasons of his Charge have afforded me a great deal of comfort; and I rejoice to find that the ground of all the bad things his lordship has to say of me is, that I quoted a passage out of a book of his, and showed how much I disliked it; which it seems had been quiet and unmolested for seven years.*

Calumny, reproach, noise, dirt, scandal, defamation, and the like words, require more art to range them decently in controversy than I am master of; and therefore I never intend to make use of them to any person, much less to his lordship; and instead of returning any such words, I shall content myself with showing that I did not deserve any such.

At the close of the Vindication, &c. I observed that his lordship had endeavored to write down (or to diminish, as I likewise express it) the religion of oaths; and for this only reason, because it stood in his way. I go on to say, "a reason which has often carried his lordship into great extremes." Of this I give an instance in these words.

* Answer to a Calumny, p. 9.

"I remember once, when he was urged (in a dispute about government) with the example of our blessed Saviour's suffering as applied by St. Peter, he made no scruple to affirm 'that the example of our Lord is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves—than to subjects;'* a doctrine which will make the ears of a Christian tingle, and ought to make him read with caution a writer so fond of his own notions as to take such steps to defend them."

On these words his lordship fixes his charge of calumny. Now if it shall appear that this is a proper instance of the thing charged on the bishop; that the words quoted from his lordship are his own words, and make an intire assertion or proposition of themselves, and make the whole of his assertion; that nothing is left out that can alter the assertion, or make it other than it appears to be; then I hope the world will acquit me of the charge of calumny; and I trust the warmth of any expression used on this occasion may be excused by the nature of the proposition I had under consideration, and the dishonor done by it to our blessed Lord and Master.

I will show the reader then:

1. That the instance was proper. I shall give his lordship's own account of the occasion of his assertions. His words are these:

"The occasion of it was this. This argument from St. Peter's exhorting slaves to be subject to their masters, 'not only to the kind but to the froward,' was urged as implying in it the duty of subjects with respect to their civil rights; and the example of our blessed Saviour being by St. Peter proposed to slaves, it was declared that this example of Christ belongs more, or is more peculiarly fit to be urged, to subjects than to slaves, in order to press the duty of passive obedience on them. Answer to Dr. Atterbury, p. 54. After many other considerations, I add, particularly in answer to this latter allegation, the following passage," p. 64. 65. 66.

His lordship here says that after many other considerations he added the following passage; that is, the passage which contains the proposition I quoted, and his lordship's proofs of it.

* Answer to Dr. Atterbury, p. 65.

This is in truth the case: his lordship had answered that "the example (of Christ) is very proper to be recommended to superiors as well as inferiors, to kings and masters as well as to subjects and slaves;" and that "the manner, and not the matter, of our suffering is to be taken from the example of our Lord;" that is, that the example of our Lord's sufferings is proper for all Christians in their several trials and afflictions; that it belongs to them as Christians, and not as considered under the relations of king and subject, of master and servant; and consequently that the example of Christ cannot be urged to limit or adjust the rights flowing from such relations. Thus his lordship had answered; and had his lordship stopped here, he would have given no offence: but not content with this, he presses on, and in the true spirit of opposition asserts the very contrary (though he had no occasion so to do) to what was objected to him, and affirms, "it is so far from being true that his example was more peculiarly fit to be recommended to subjects, considered as such, than to slaves, that I think the *very contrary* to be evident." And after producing some of his reasons which moved him so to think, he says, I cannot forbear (I am sorry he could not) making the two following observations: the second of which observations is in these very words; "and likewise that the example of our Lord is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves, by whose condition he is pleased frequently to describe his own low estate, than to subjects, whose condition is never used to that purpose, and whom he is never said to personate in his lowest and most oppressed condition."

I have stated the case, as I truly think, with all fairness; and I desire the reader to judge whether this be not an instance of his lordship's running into extremes out of opposition? Can any one think that if his lordship had been considering the example of Christ's sufferings, without an objection drawn from it against his own doctrine, that he could possibly have come to say, "that Christ's example is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves—than to subjects?" For my own part I do not believe this of his lordship; and as I placed it at first to the account of the extreme opposition to his adversary, so do I still place it to the same account; and it is therefore, as I con-

ceive, a proper instance, and comes up fully to the point for which it is mentioned.

2. That the words quoted by me are his lordship's own words. This is not denied.

3. That as they make an intire assertion or proposition of themselves, so do they contain truly the whole of what he asserts, exclusive of his reasons for it. The proposition which his lordship was to confute, as expressed by himself, was this; "that the example of Christ was more peculiarly fit to be recommended to subjects, considered as such, than to slaves;" and he says that he "thinks the very contrary to be evident." The contrary proposition then was what his lordship was to maintain, and that is fully expressed in the words by me quoted; and the words which I omitted make no part of the contrary proposition. From whence it is plain that I have given the intire assertion and proposition which his lordship professed to maintain, and intirely in his own words, without adding to or substracting from the proposition which he undertook to justify; that proposition which his lordship laid down at the beginning of paragraph 10, (and is now transcribed into his answer,) and which he labors to maintain to the end of that long paragraph.

4. There is nothing left out (in my quotation) that can alter the assertion, or make it other than it appears to be.

The words left out in my quotation contain the reasons given by his lordship for the assertion. A reason brought to support a proposition cannot alter the nature of the proposition, or make it other than it is in itself; and therefore his lordship must not say that the proposition quoted in his own words is not his proposition, because I did not quote his reasons in support of it. The proposition is the same, and expresses the same thing, whether the reasons be added or not added. I never before heard that there was any calumny in quoting or reporting a man's principles or assertions, though you did not at the same time report his reasons for them. Indeed the reasons which his lordship himself has now produced to the world, are so far from satisfying even himself, that he seems not willing to rest the cause on them, but has given such an interpretation of his words quoted by me, as is inconsistent with the common

use of language and with common sense. I will insert the paragraph intire where his lordship comes to the pinch of the case.

" I hope it is not too shocking to the ears of a Christian dean to affirm that the example of Christ is very fit to be proposed to slaves, in order to engage them to bear the unavoidable evils of their unhappy condition with patience and resignation; because the Apostles themselves have done this. And I beg to know the great difference between saying that this is fit and proper in the positive degree; and saying, in the comparative, that this is more peculiarly fit than to propose it to civil subjects, considered as such."

His lordship's defence here turns on this, that there is no great difference between saying positively, that the example of Christ is fit and proper to be proposed to slaves; and saying, by way of comparison, that it is (much) more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves than to subjects. His lordship can see no great difference, and I profess I can see very little similitude between the two assertions. He that says, 'it is very fit to be proposed to slaves,' says what is very true; but he that says, 'it is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves than subjects,' says what will appear to be very false, and I must still say, very shocking to a Christian. The example of Christ was not purposed to or fitted for any one sort of men more than another; but it is recommended to all as Christians: it was as proper to be urged to King Charles the First in his days of distress, as ever it was to the meanest slave in the Roman empire; for though, as his lordship observes, our Saviour appeared in a low and afflicted condition, yet he descended from the highest and most glorious state; and consequently, his example is equally fit for the highest of the sons of men in their affliction, and for the lowest. How comes his lordship then to affirm that it is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves than subjects. Is not the bishop sensible this cannot be defended, when he tells us there is no great difference between this assertion, and saying that the example of Christ is fit to be proposed to slaves? I desire his lordship would try these two ways of speaking in any other case, and see whether they amount to one and the same thing. Let us try them in a case in which his lordship is concerned. He tells us often that every

Christian has a right to interpret the Scripture. Suppose then that I should tell his lordship that it is his sense, that it is fit and proper for the weakest men to interpret Scripture; he would perhaps allow the consequence; but should I tell him that he appears to me to affirm that it is much more peculiarly fit for the weakest men to interpret Scripture than for the wisest and most learned, I am afraid he would complain of very ill usage; and yet why should he, if there be no great difference between these two forms of expression? It is plain then, that however his lordship in his anger charges me with calumny for quoting his words; yet he himself, after all he can say for them, is not willing to abide by them, and would have the reader believe that there is no great difference between saying, "that the example of Christ is fit to be proposed to slaves;" and, "that it is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves—than to subjects." He that says it is fit for slaves, may say also it is equally fit for subjects; but he that says it is peculiarly fit for slaves, does imply that there is some degree of unfitness in it with respect to subjects. And what can I do in this case, but appeal to the common sense of mankind? I am willing to put the cause on this issue, on which his lordship has put it: if there appears no great difference between the two assertions, then am I to be charged; but, in truth, rather with want of sense than with the guilt of calumny. But if these two expressions do greatly differ, then let others judge what his lordship is guilty of in charging me with calumny for reminding him of his own words; words which he has too much sense to defend, and too little ingenuity to retract.

What his lordship confesses, that he has affirmed, "that our blessed Lord's example is more peculiarly fit to be proposed to the low, poor, and distressed part of mankind, than to the fortunate and rich," may be true; and yet it will be very wrong and shocking in any one to affirm that the example of Christ is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to a beggar than to a gentleman. But in truth this confession of his lordship appears to me to be a mere fallacy: if he means that an example of patient suffering is more fit to be urged to those who do suffer than to those who do not, he speaks a great truth, but nothing to the present purpose. If he means that our Lord's example

is more proper to the poor in their sufferings than to the rich in their sufferings, he speaks to his purpose indeed, but the assertion is what every Christian must reject. So when he says, "this is more peculiarly fit to be proposed to persons in a low condition," he imposes on his reader; for the greatest persons may be in a low condition as well as the meanest: he ought to have said, not *in*, but *of* a low condition; and then the assertion would have been fairly to his purpose, but false in itself; for the example of Christ is fit for persons *of* all conditions, and equally fit for kings, subjects, and slaves, when they suffer wrongfully. For with respect to slaves themselves, when they are kindly used by their masters, and treated with equity and humanity, and suffer nothing by ill usage whilst they do their duty, so long the example of Christ's sufferings is not peculiarly fit for their condition; and when they do suffer wrongfully, the example belongs to them not as slaves, but as Christians suffering for righteousness' sake.

As to what his lordship says of his having in his answer to Dr. Atterbury explained the example of Christ in a proper manner, I never said he had not; nor do I now say it. But this I have said, and this I still say, that not content to explain it properly and justly, he was carried in the heat of his opposition to a great extreme, and could not leave the cause when he had made, as he says, a proper answer, but would go on till he came to the very contrary (to use his own words) to what had been objected to him. And because it had been said that the example of Christ (as his lordship represents his adversary's words, which I have not before me) belongs more to subjects than to slaves, therefore his lordship would not leave the argument until he had affirmed, "that the example of Christ is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves than to subjects." And this, I think, was being carried into a very great extreme.

I do not pretend here to consider the argument of his lordship's learned adversary, or the reasons given by him for the support of his opinion: I take the whole on the bishop's own representation of the case, and find enough to justify what I said, that he was carried into great extremes through opposition.

I presume I have said enough to justify the fairness of my quotation; but his lordship has more complaints, and is very angry with me for saying that his assertion will make the ears of a Christian tingle. To do justice therefore to myself against his lordship's violent recrimination, I will go on to show that his assertion is as bad as those words of mine represent it to be, and that he has neither Scripture nor reason to support him in it.

And, first, I will show the reader what the assertion amounts to, by giving his lordship's explication of the terms of his proposition. By slaves then he means slaves properly so called;* that is, such as are bought in the market, or taken captive.† By subjects, he means such as have civil rights and properties, and are not bound by the mere will of their kings; as slaves are, who are bought and sold in the market. I suppose I need not refer to any particular passages to prove this to be his sense of the word subject.

The proposition which his lordship had to answer was, according to his own account,‡ this. The example of Christ "is more peculiarly fit to be recommended to subjects, considered as such, than to slaves." He undertakes to maintain the very contrary to be true: the proposition then which he affirms is this: "that the example of our Lord is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves (considered as such) than to subjects considered as such:" that is, the example of our Lord is much more fit for such as are bought and sold in markets, than for such as have civil rights and properties. This assertion is very shocking to a Christian, as being highly dishonorable to our blessed Saviour. And one of the bishop's reasons for this assertion, namely, "that the New Testament—represents the humiliation and low estate of Christ—by the condition of slaves;" that is, of such slaves as are bought and sold in the market, is equally bad, equally dishonorable to our blessed Saviour, as will soon appear.

But to take his reasons for his assertion in their order, as they are now set forth in his answer. The first is, "that St.

* Answer to Dr. Atterbury, p. 55. 59. † Ibid. p. 54. 59.
‡ Page 64.

Peter expressly proposes the example of our blessed Lord to slaves."* To which I answer, that this may be true, and yet nothing to his lordship's purpose: for it is one thing expressly to propose the example of Christ to slaves, and another to propose it as much more peculiarly fit for slaves than for subjects. Should a physician expressly prescribe the Jesuits' bark for a servant who has an ague, would his lordship infer that Jesuits' bark is much more peculiarly fit for a servant's ague than for a master's? I think he would not; and therefore what he says of the example as proposed by St. Peter comes not near his point.

Besides, St. Peter does not speak of slaves peculiarly in his lordship's sense of the word, but of domestics of all sorts; he calls them not δοῦλοι, but οἰκέται; not slaves, but domestics; though he had just before used the word δοῦλος, declaring Christians of all ranks to be δοῦλοι Θεοῦ, *servants of God;* and he calls the masters, not κύριοι, but δεσπόται, that is οἰκοδεσπόται, *masters of families.* If his lordship had consulted only Stephens' Thesaurus, he would have found that οἰκέται are not peculiarly slaves, but according to Hesychius, οἱ κατὰ τὸν οἶκον πάντες; according to Suidas, οὐ μόνον οἱ θεράποντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντες οἱ κατὰ τὴν οἰκίαν: *not only servants, but all that belong to the family:* that an old grammarian quoted by Eustat. says, οἰκέτας *vocatos fuisse non solum* τοὺς κατ' ἀγροὺς ὑπουργοὺς, not only slaves tied to hard labor in the country, *sed etiam* τοὺς ἐν οἰκίαις ἐλευθέρους, but also the freemen belonging to the family. And under the word οἰκεὺς he would have seen this account of the word from Eustat. οἰκέται, οἱ κατὰ τὴν οἰκίαν διατρίβοντες, κἂν εἶεν ἐλεύθεροι: *such as belong to the family though they are free.*

1. He that considers this account of the word, will, I believe, see sufficient reason why the example proposed by St. Peter ought not to be confined to slaves properly so called. And had St. Peter used the word δοῦλος, I shall show that even that word could not reasonably have been confined to such slaves. For ought then that appears to the contrary, St. Peter did not peculiarly speak to slaves in the sense in which his lordship understands the word.

* Answer to Calumny, p. 13.

2. But suppose he did speak to such slaves; yet it is certain that he does not propose the example of Christ to them as peculiarly fit for them considered as slaves. He thus exhorts them; 'servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.' At verse 19. he gives them a reason why they should so do; but even this reason is general, and not peculiarly fit for slaves. His words are: 'For this is thank-worthy, (εἰ τίς) if *any* man (not, if any slave) for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully:' and that it is suffering wrongfully while they do well, and not merely as slaves, that is the acceptable thing to God, the next verse shows. And when he comes, at verse 21. to propose the example of Christ, the reasons he gives why the example of Christ should be followed, are such as affect all men equally, and have nothing in them peculiar to slaves: 'for even hereunto are ye called:' that is, to suffer patiently, when it shall be your lot, in well-doing, which is a reason to all Christians; for St. Paul, speaking, not to slaves, but to the servants of Jesus Christ at Philippi with the bishops and deacons, tells them, 'unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake:' i. 29. St. Peter goes on: 'because Christ also suffered for us.' If this be a good reason for imitating his example, it is good to all; for Christ suffered not for slaves peculiarly, but for all the sons of men; and in like manner the argument goes on on general topics to the end of the chapter; and the last verse shows how St. Peter applied the example, and under what character he considered those to whom he applied it; for thus he speaks to them, 'for ye were as sheep going astray, but now are returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls.' Now then ye who were gone astray, &c. were not peculiarly slaves, but include the Christians of all sorts, whether subjects or slaves. But if his lordship's reason be good, St. Peter's argument must stand thus: 'this is thank-worthy, if a man (that is, a slave) for conscience toward God endure grief: for what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye (slaves) take it patiently; but if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye (slaves) take it patiently, this is acceptable to God; for even hereunto were ye (slaves peculiarly) called, because

Christ also suffered for us;' (slaves peculiarly,) verse 21. 'Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree; that we (slaves) being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye (slaves) were healed:' verse 24. 'for ye (slaves peculiarly) were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls.' So that if the example of Christ be peculiarly here applied to slaves, it must be because he is peculiarly bishop of the souls of slaves.

Thus you see what extravagant absurdities follow from supposing St. Peter to recommend the example of Christ as peculiarly fit for slaves.

3. In the following chapter, St. Peter, after considering the duty of wives to their husbands, and of husbands to wives, at verse 8. speaks to all sorts of Christians in general: 'finally be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another—not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing:' verse 9. In the following verses he proposes to them the advantages that such gentle behavior will yield even in this life; and at verse 14. tells them, 'but and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye:' and at the 18th verse he proposes to all the example of Christ, 'for Christ also hath once suffered, the just for the unjust.' At chap. iv. verse 1. he again makes a general application of the example to all Christians: 'forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.' Now he that proposed the example of Christ's sufferings to all sorts of Christians in this manner, could not possibly propose it as much more peculiarly fit for slaves than for subjects.

His lordship's second reason for his assertion is in these words, "that in mentioning and handling the duty of subjects, considered as civil subjects, neither he (St. Peter) nor any other Apostle ever once proposes the example of Christ's passive submission and non-resistance."*

Allowing this to be true, yet I cannot see what his lordship gets by it: if the example of Christ was not proposed to subjects as such, will it follow that it is much more peculiarly fit for slaves than for subjects? If it is not peculiarly fit for subjects, must it needs therefore be peculiarly fit for slaves? So

* Page 13. Answer to a Calumny.

that his lordship's assertion is neither proved nor qualified in any degree by this observation, supposing it to be intirely right. But in truth, the example of Christ's sufferings is proposed just as much to subjects considered as such as it is to slaves considered as such. His lordship (here) lays very great stress on this; that the example of Christ is by St. Peter connected immediately to the case of slaves, which can signify little to his cause; since all the reasons given by St. Peter to inforce the example are such as equally concern all, whether slaves or not; and in the very next chapter the example is expressly proposed to all. It had been most certainly a very invidious thing for the Apostles directly to have said that governors would be injurious to their subjects, and might have drawn on Christians the indignation and wrath of the powers of the world: for this reason St. Peter seems purposely to avoid (as St. Paul does likewise) putting the case of unjust princes, and does with great address put the case of hard and ill usage with respect to masters, which is immediately subjoined to what he says to subjects; and then proposes the example of Christ, and urges it with such reasons as he knew would reach every Christian's case suffering wrongfully, whether it were under the oppression of a prince or of a master. I am the more inclined to think that this was really his design, from observing how St. Peter conducts himself in speaking to Christian subjects, chapters ii. and iii. Having largely treated of the duty of subjects from verse 13. to 17. inclusively, he throws in the case of servants and hard masters in one single verse, and goes immediately within a verse or two to the example of Christ, and urges it to the end of the chapter, on reasons common to all sorts of Christians; which makes it probable that he chose to speak of servants in this place on purpose that he might propose the case of unjust suffering, and yet without expressly applying to magistrates so as to give offence. This I say is probable, especially considering that in the third chapter he speaks expressly to all sorts of Christians, and puts the case of their suffering for righteousness' sake; but then having mentioned their suffering wrongfully, he industriously avoids mentioning of magistrates at the same time; and when he exhorts Christians not to fear those who might so evilly intreat them, he

names no person, but gives a relative without an antecedent, rather than he would name civil governors; 'But and if (says he) ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye:' τὸν δὲ φόβον αὐτῶν μὴ φοβηθῆτε· 'and be not afraid of their terror.' Of whose terror? Look back, and you will find no persons mentioned to whom the word *their* can refer; and the Apostle seems to me on purpose to suppress the mention of them, that he might not offend; for that he had the civil powers in his eye is pretty plain from chap. iv. 15. 'But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busy body in other men's affairs,' ὡς ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοπος, as a spy, or pryer into matters in which he is not concerned; and the word as properly signifies meddlers in politics as in private affairs. Now pray consider under what power and from what hands do men suffer as murderers, as thieves, &c. Private men do not punish for robbery or murder, but magistrates do; can it then be supposed that St. Peter had not magistrates in his view when he said this? He adds in the next verse, 'yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed.' To suffer as a Christian is to suffer for being a Christian, and for rejecting and despising the common and professed idolatry; and punishment on this account was not administered by private persons, but by magistrates; and therefore St. Peter, speaking of the sufferings of Christians, chapters iii. and iv. had regard to their suffering under the civil powers; and yet, chap. iii. 18. he does expressly apply the example of Christ's sufferings to this case: not indeed to prove that the magistrate had a right to injure Christians, but to show Christians how they ought to bear the calamities which they suffered wrongfully. And the very same application belongs to slaves; for the example of Christ recommended even to them, does not (as his lordship confesses*) prove that they may in no case seek a remedy; but it shows them how to bear with patience the miseries which they endure for righteousness' sake, or without deserving them. And let any man now consider the case, and tell me what could carry his lordship into so strange an assertion as this, that the example of Christ is much more peculiarly fit for slaves

* Answer to Dr. Atterbury, p. 63.

than subjects? I know but of one thing that can be said to this; namely, that possibly St. Peter might write this with an eye to the Jews, under whose malice sometimes the Christians suffered as Christians. But that could not be the case here; for St. Peter writes to the Christians of the dispersion, τοῖς παρεπιδήμοις, to the 'strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia;' countries where the Jews had no power to put their malice in execution, and therefore they could not be intended by the Apostle; and there was no power but the civil power to which the Apostle could refer with respect to all these countries; for that he did not speak of private malice or private injuries, has been already shown.

Nor is it any wonder that St. Peter should apply the example of Christ to Christians suffering under the civil powers for righteousness' sake, when our Saviour himself had so applied it before him. In the 10th of St. Matthew our blessed Lord sends forth the twelve to preach, and tells them, verse 18. 'Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles:' and after describing to them many circumstances of the persecution they were to undergo, he adds, verses 24-26. 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord; it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord: if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household: fear them not therefore.' And at verse 28. he says, 'Fear not them which kill the body,' &c. In the 24th of St. Matthew, in the 13th of St. Mark, and 21st of St. Luke, he tells them they shall be 'delivered up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for his name's sake:' and exhorts them 'to possess their souls in patience.' In the 15th of St. John our Lord is on the same subject, and there expressly sets his own example before his disciples: 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than the lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you:' verses 18. 20. And at chapter xvi. verse 33. he thus encourages them: 'In the world ye shall have

tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'

Thus you see our Saviour proposes his example to such as were not slaves; to such as were to suffer under the power of kings and rulers: not to justify rulers in their abusing Christians, but to arm Christians with patience when they suffer wrongfully. And shall we now, after having seen that Christ himself proposes his example to Christians of all ranks, and who were to suffer from civil powers, say with his lordship, that the example of Christ is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves than to subjects? I hope I have said enough on this head to make his lordship reconsider what he seems to affirm, that the example of Christ's sufferings is never proposed in Scripture to subjects, and always to slaves.

His lordship's third reason is, "3. that the New Testament itself represents the humiliation and low estate of Christ in this world by the condition of slaves, the lowest and most helpless part of mankind, and never once by the low estate or helpless condition of civil subjects as such; which would have been, had they been put in the New Testament in the same circumstances with slaves."

"By the condition of slaves." Slaves, you must remember, are in his lordship's sense such as are bought and sold in markets for the service of their masters; and I do affirm that the Scripture never thus represents the low estate of Christ. I will begin with desiring the reader to consider a passage in St. John, because our Saviour is there pressing his own example in one of the most servile things that ever he did, on all his disciples. In the 13th of St. John we read that our Saviour 'rising from supper laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself;' then 'poured water into a bason, and washed his disciples' feet, and wiped them with the towel wherewith he was girded.' Here, if ever, we might expect to find our Saviour's low estate represented by the condition of a slave; but we shall find nothing less. This history is introduced by the Apostle with an express declaration of the great power and dignity of our Saviour, 'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his gar-

ments, and took a towel,' &c. verses 3. 4. And after the work was over, our blessed Saviour, in applying this very example to his disciples, begins with reminding them of his own superiority over them: 'Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am:' ver. 13. Is this like one whose estate the Scripture is to represent by the condition of a slave? But let us hear the rest: 'If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet:' ver. 14. The reason of which is expressed at ver. 16. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him:' that is, if I the greatest among you have not thought it below me to condescend to wash your feet, let none of you who are confessedly my inferiors, think much to do the same office of love and humility: so that this example of our Lord in so servile an employment is so far from being founded in a representation of his estate by the condition of a slave, that it is really inconsistent with it; for one who was to personate a slave in washing of other's feet, though he might recommend his example of patience and submission to his duty, yet he could not say as our Lord does, consider what the greatest among you has done; what I your Lord and Master have done, not as bound in duty to you my servants, but out of love and humility, and never think it below you to do likewise. This is an exhortation not fit for a slave to make; a slave cannot urge his great love or great humility in doing what his condition requires of him, nor can he plead his example as an argument to the highest for condescension towards the lowest. But thus our Saviour pleads his example, not looking on himself as a slave, but as a Lord and Master, as one 'into whose hands the Father had given all things.' What shall we say then; that the example of Christ is much more peculiarly fit for slaves than for subjects? God forbid!

So again, in the 20th of St. Matthew, when there was indignation among the disciples occasioned by the petition of the mother of Zebedee's children and her sons, our Saviour exhorts them all to humility; 'whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:' verse 27. and then sets before them his own example; 'even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for

many:' verse 28. where his ministry and his death are not represented as the consequences of a slavish condition, but of a generous condescension; and the force of the example here is expressly founded on this, that the Son of man was chief among them; he ministered to them therefore not as one bought in the market for servitude, but as chief among them, and doing the work, not of necessity, but of love.

From these two instances (and there are more such) it appears that the example of our Saviour's humility is not urged in Scripture on the representation of his condition to that of a slave, but on account of his being lord, and master, and chief, though he ministered unto others. But to go on.

St. Paul was, in his lordship's opinion, a perfect freeman, and a great contender for civil rights; and yet he says of himself that he had a great desire to know *τὴν κοινωνίαν τῶν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ*, 'the fellowship of Christ's sufferings:' Phil. iii. 10. But if it was (as his lordship represents the case) part of Christ's sufferings to personate a slave, how could St. Paul pretend to desire the (*κοινωνίαν*) fellowship of his sufferings, who always behaved himself like so free a subject?

But if St. Paul, a freeborn subject, did 'partake in the sufferings' (as it is elsewhere expressed) of Christ, then the sufferings of Christ can yield his lordship no argument to say that Christ was represented as a slave in Scripture. And pray which of Christ's sufferings prove any thing like slavery to be his condition? He was accused and condemned by false evidence; so was Naboth, yet he was no slave, for he had an estate in land. He was scourged of the Jews; so was St. Paul three times, and yet he was free-born. Nay, the very form and process of our Saviour's trial proves that he neither was nor was taken to be a slave; he was tried before the Roman governor, and so little was it suspected that he was a slave, or that his business here was to represent a slave, that the great accusation against him was that he pretended to be a king; and the Jews told Pilate that he was no friend to Cæsar if he let so dangerous a man to the government escape. All this is doubtless very like the trial of a slave! Let us then look back to his birth: he was of the house and lineage of David, as free a family at least as any in the country; and that the Jews were no slaves, you

have their own testimony, John viii. 33. 'We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?' His reputed father was of a trade that probably kept him and his family above necessity; for though our Lord was on his birth laid in a manger, yet that happened not through the extreme poverty of his parents, but through the crowd of people at Bethlehem, which was so great that there was no room in the inn. But suppose the family to have been never so poor, (and rich it certainly was not,) yet many free-born families are exceeding poor in every nation. During his childhood he lived with his parents as other children do; when he appeared in the world, and did things to the astonishment of the Jews, many said, 'is not this the carpenter's son?' But we do not find that any one suspected him to be a slave, or inquired who his master was? And yet, had there been room for such a suggestion, the Jews, who were disposed to upbraid him and lessen him in the eyes of the people, would rather have said, 'is not this a mere slave,' than 'is not this the carpenter's son.' Our Saviour himself, speaking of his lowest state, says, 'the Son of man hath not where to lay his head:' but poverty and slavery are two things, and there is a great difference between having no money, and being sold for money in the market. Besides, slaves were not to seek where to lay their heads; they were fixed to the houses of their masters, and it was part of their duty to know and to keep their home. On the whole, I cannot imagine on what passages his lordship builds, when he says in his book that our Lord is "pleased frequently to describe his own low estate by the condition of slaves;" or when he says "here (in his Answer) that the New Testament itself represents the low estate of Christ —by the condition of slaves." His lordship has not thought fit either in his book or in his Answer to produce one single passage where our Saviour does so describe himself; and but one passage (which shall be considered presently) from the whole Testament, where it is pretended that he is so described, and that too nothing to the purpose. And yet he makes no scruple to say, "if it be a crime to represent the condition and example of our blessed Lord as I have done, the imputation of the accuser (that is, τοῦ διαβόλου) falls on the New Testament, and not on me:" Answer p. 14. But as great an accuser or

διάβολος as I am, I wish his lordship had in this and in other instances shown no greater disrespect to the holy Scriptures than I have done. The reader sees here how frankly he throws the imputation from himself to the New Testament, though the New Testament has said nothing to give him a pretence for so doing. This is his lordship's common practice; I will give one famous instance, and will venture another charge of calumny for quoting his own words; "I thought it my greatest defence," says his lordship, "to shelter what I had said under the name of our common Lord and Master; and rather than express my reason (mind, reader,) in my *own* words, I chose rather to make use of his authority, and to say that, 'to apply worldly motives in the cases mentioned is to act contrary to the interests of true religion, as it is plainly opposite to the maxims on which Christ founded his kingdom.'"* Whose are these words, I beseech you? His lordship seems to me to say that the words are not his, and I assure the reader they are not the words of Scripture; and as they are not the words of Scripture, so neither have they the authority of Scripture, but stand merely on his lordship's consequential reasonings. I leave his lordship now to account for this passage, and the reader to consider in what manner his lordship uses the name of our Lord and Master for a shelter.

I go on to the bishop's fourth and last reason: "that our Lord voluntarily put himself into that low, oppressed, helpless condition of a servant, and never accounted it his infamy, but his great glory, to be so spoken of. St. Paul particularly makes it his great reward."

His lordship here truly observes that our Saviour voluntarily suffered all that befel him. This indeed was the glory of his sufferings, that they were not, that they could not be imposed on him; but he chose them out of pure love and compassion to men. And this one consideration, if duly weighed, might have shown his lordship that our Saviour's sufferings were not like to the sufferings of a slave. Slaves suffer not voluntarily, but out of necessity: not out of love to those from whom they suffer, but because they can no way avoid it. This is the very circumstance on which St. Paul lays the stress in that passage

* Answer to Rep. p. 155.

referred to by the bishop; and therefore in that passage St. Paul considers him not suffering as a slave by the necessity of his condition, but as the freest among men, and suffering nothing but what he chose to suffer. This was his great glory, this was the ground of his great reward and exaltation; and when Christians find him thus represented to them in Scripture, as suffering every thing for their sakes out of his own free choice, how can they possibly conceive of him as a slave, as one sold into servitude, who has no will of his own, but must indure what the imperious will of another thinks fit to lay on him? Yes, his lordship will say; our Saviour did suffer out of choice; and it was out of choice that he appeared as a slave. And for this he will quote (his only authority) the passage of St. Paul to the Philippians, chap. ii. that he (Christ) 'took on him the form of a servant,' &c.

To quote Scripture by the mere sound of words is to judge of Scripture by the ear, and not by the understanding. In our English translation of this passage we have the word *servant*, for which his lordship in his book puts the word *slave* as equivalent to it; and leads his reader to think that St. Paul represents our Saviour as taking on him the form of a slave, that is, of one who is not *sui juris*, but is bought and sold in the market for the service of a private master; and yet certain it is that nothing can be more disagreeable to St. Paul's sense than this interpretation of his words. The Apostle was not speaking to slaves peculiarly, and therefore had no occasion (supposing that he could truly have done it) to represent Christ under the form of a slave properly so called: he writes to all the 'servants' (not slaves) 'of Jesus Christ at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons;' and at chapter ii. he exhorts them not to bear the hardships of their servile condition patiently, but to be 'like-minded, to have the same love, to be of one accord, of one mind.' And lest pride (as it is naturally apt) should prevent their compliance with these duties, he adds, ver. 3. 'let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.' At ver. 5. he says, 'let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' And in the following verses he sets forth his example, and shows that he did not τὰ ἑαυτοῦ σκοπεῖν, 'look on his own things,' but was

content to lay aside his glory that he might do good to others. This is the Apostle's view; and now let us consider what he says of Christ. Thus he speaks, 'who being ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ, in the form of God'—ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, emptied himself, or voluntarily laid aside that divine form of glory, power, and majesty, and took on himself (willingly) μορφὴν δούλου, 'the form of a servant.' The form of a servant is here opposed, not to the form of a subject or of a freeman, but to the form of God. And I desire his lordship to consider whether the form of God be so little, so inconsiderable a thing, that the form of a servant, when opposed to it, must needs signify the form of a slave properly so called. With respect to God, the very highest beings are servants; servant is the impressed character of every creature, as supreme is the essential attribute of the Creator. When therefore the form of a servant is opposed to the form of God, it signifies a servant to God, and not a slave to men. And thus our Saviour himself describes his own service, that he came to do the will of God; nor is there a single instance to be found (that I know of) where our Saviour appears to be subject to the will of man like a slave, but his whole subjection lay in submitting to the will of God his heavenly Father; for this reason he (who in the beginning was with God and was God) came down to men, and was made man. The author to the Hebrews, to show the great excellency of Christ above the angels of God, puts this question, 'to which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?' And again, 'I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son:' i. 5. This was the excellency of Christ, that he was the Son of God, and 'heir of all things, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power:' ver. 3. But angels were not the sons of God in the same sense; they had not the μορφὴ Θεοῦ, the brightness of his glory, but were all servants. 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' ver. 14. Here you see that angels are distinguished from Christ, because he was the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person, (ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ;) but they were all ministering spirits (ἐν μορφῇ δούλων) 'sent forth (by God) to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.' And thus

our Saviour, when he laid aside the form of God, the brightness of his Father's glory, in order to do the will of God, and to minister to them who were to be heirs of salvation, he then took on him (*μορφὴν δούλου*) the form of a servant; that is, from appearing in the glory and majesty of God as ruler of the universe, he took on him that form in which he was so to minister, and which is therefore called *μορφὴ δούλου*. In this sense all Christians, ancient and modern, (Socinians excepted,) have understood the text, and little suspected that the form of a servant as opposed by St. Paul to the form of God, had any relation to the state or condition of slaves properly so called; and, I believe, had any one explained this text in the Council of Nice, as his lordship has, it would have made the ears of the Christian bishops tingle.

The ancient author Hermas, in his Pastor, proposes this question, "quare Filius Dei, in similitudine hâc, servili loco ponitur?" The Pastor answers him; "in servili conditione non ponitur Filius Dei, sed in magnâ potestate et imperio." And then, after mentioning the incarnation, he adds, "cum igitur corpus illud paruisset omni tempore Spiritui Sancto, recteque et castè laborâsset cum eo, nec succubuisset in omni tempore; fatigatum corpus illud serviliter conversatum est, sed fortiter cum Spiritu Sancto, comprobatum Deo, receptum est.*" Here you evidently see that the servitude of our Saviour was no other than that of his doing the work of God. And this is the obedience which St. Paul, as well as this ancient Christian writer, makes to be the ground of his exaltation.

But to go on with the text. At verse 8. St. Paul thus illustrates our Saviour's humility: 'and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' His being obedient to death nobody can think to be an instance of his likeness to a slave; but then the death of the cross perhaps may be thought to bear a near resemblance to the execution of a slave; and it is true that crucifixion was not used to the freemen of Rome. Cicero, in his fifth book against Verres, exclaims against the indignity done to the

* In Mr. Le Clerc's edition of the Patres Apostolici, p. 105.

liberties of Rome, when Verres crucified a Roman citizen; but that all other freemen were equally exempted from this punishment is not true. It was the punishment used towards those who were movers of sedition in the provinces, though they were not slaves, but freemen; and our Lord being accused and condemned by Pilate on this head as affecting the kingdom, he was carried to the cross because of his supposed crime, and not because of his condition. I will transcribe the words of Grotius to this purpose, and leave his lordship to disprove them. "Crucem autem irrogatam Christo tanquam seditionis auctori, verissimè ab aliis notatum est; eam enim pœnam ei crimini statuunt Romanæ leges, ut notat Paulus v. Sent. Tit. 22. pro qua nunc furcam in pandectis legimus, quippe crucis usu in suppliciis per Constantinum sublato. Exempla crucifixorum seditionis crimine in ipsa Judæa et a Varo et a Floro habes apud Josephum, in Matt. cap. 27. v. 26."

Thus you see this passage of St. Paul affords his lordship no shelter for his assertion; here is nothing that describes our Saviour as being in a state or appearing in a state of slavery. The Apostle represents him as willingly laying aside the godlike form of divine majesty, and taking on him, instead of the image of the power of God, the form and character of a servant of God. Besides, if we consider only the use of the word δοῦλος, (*servant*,) on which his lordship's great dependence is, and which he tells us had as mean an idea annexed to it in St. Paul's time as the word slave has now; we shall find that it is far from necessarily signifying a slave in his sense, properly so called. St. Paul uses it of himself and the other Apostles, who were not slaves, 2 Cor. iv. 5. and our Saviour, Mark x. 44. exhorts all his disciples thus: 'whosoever of you will be chief, let him be πάντων δοῦλος, the servant of all.' And it is evident here, both from the foregoing and following verse, that δοῦλος and διάκονος are equivalent, and that our Saviour was never any otherwise a δοῦλος than as he exhorts his disciples to be by ministering willingly to others for their good. In consequence of this precept of our Lord's, St. Paul says, 1 Cor. ix. 19. 'though I be free from all men, (that is, no man's servant or slave) yet, πᾶσιν ἐμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα, have I made myself a servant unto all:' where you see that being

a servant in the Christian sense is not inconsistent with freedom; so far from it, that the same Apostle says expressly, vii. 22. *ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς, δοῦλός ἐστι Χριστοῦ*· 'he that is called being free, is Christ's servant.' In the very chapter of the Philippians to which his lordship refers, St. Paul uses the verb *δουλεύειν*, to express the obedience of a son to a father, verse 22.: so in the parable of the prodigal the elder son says to his father, *τοσαῦτα ἔτη δουλεύω σοι*· 'these many years do I serve thee.' In like manner the same word is used to express the service of love and charity which Christians owe to one another; thus we read Gal. v. 13. 'for, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, *ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις*, but by love serve one another.' In this sense it is that all Christians are to be *δοῦλοι*, servants to men; and in no other sense was their master a servant with respect to men.

This passage in the epistle to the Philippians being the only one produced by his lordship for his strange, and, until he invented it, unheard-of doctrine; and this text being directly opposite to the doctrine he would support, and representing our Saviour as taking on him the form of a servant to God, and not of a slave to men; and the word *δοῦλος*, on which his lordship builds, being used in Scripture of all Christians with respect to the service they owe to God, and the love they owe to each other, and therefore not necessarily denoting a slave in this text of St. Paul to the Philippians; the reader must be surprised to hear his lordship declaring, that to blame this doctrine of his is to "accuse the New Testament," to "calumniate the Apostles," to "reproach St. Paul;" nay, "to contradict Christ himself."

I wish his lordship had used these great names with more respect; but this is his method of appealing to Scripture; and thus it is that all his doctrines are Scripture doctrines, and all his adversaries opposers of Christ and his Apostles.

For my own part, after having considered this matter maturely, and as carefully as I am able, his lordship's proposition still appears to me very shocking, as well as destitute of all support; nor do I know a single text in Scripture that can be made to speak in its behalf. And whatever his lordship may

think, not only I, but many other serious Christians have been long offended at it, and have wondered how his lordship could be led into such an assertion. Our Saviour's behavior could afford him no ground for it; no one ever acted with a freer spirit; he came to do the will of God, and not to be subject to the will of man; he came to do good to men, and to suffer for them, and therefore submitted to perform the offices of love and charity towards them. Other servitude than this he knew not: nay, those passages of his life which carry the greatest appearance with them of the submission to human power, are particularly guarded against all suspicions of what his lordship now asserts, that he acted the part of a slave. St. Luke tells us he was subject to his parents, ii. 52. And yet when his mother seemed to complain of his carriage, and said, 'Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?' he answered, 'wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' intimating plainly a freedom in himself, with respect even to the submission due to his parents, not common to all sons. The same thing appears again, John ii. 4. 5. at the marriage in Cana of Galilee.

And though our Lord says of himself that he came to minister, yet when he is concerned in civil affairs he does not govern himself by this consideration that he is δοῦλος, a servant, but as a free subject submits to pay tribute to the temple, (which slaves in the bishop's sense could not do, for they had no property); but even here, the question he puts to St. Peter, Mat. xvii. 25. shows that he looked on himself not as a subject of man, but as the Son of God; and yet that he might not give offence, he consented to pay with other subjects, from whom in appearance he nothing differed. Had he appeared as a slave, he had given no offence by not paying; but that he might comply with the character of a subject under which he appeared, he wrought a miracle to answer the demand, and paid that tribute to the temple which the sea first paid him as its great Lord and Master.

The case of his washing the disciples' feet has been already considered.

If we look to his lowest state, when he seemed to be in the power of his enemies and at their command, even there we shall find that he acted as a servant of God, and not as a slave to

man. When the officers, &c. came to seize him, John xviii. he offered himself to them; they, astonished, fell down to the ground. Again he offers himself, and Peter drew the sword in his defence; for which our Lord rebuked him, and said, 'the cup which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' verse 11. putting the whole of his submission on this, that it was the will of God that he should suffer; and telling Peter, Mat. xxvi. 53. that he could have more than twelve legions of angels to assist him, if he thought it proper. 'But how then' (says he, verse 54.) 'shall the Scriptures of the prophets (that is, the declared will of God) be fulfilled?' And at his trial he tells Pilate, John xix. 11. 'Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.' Is there any thing in all this like being subject to the will of a man, as a slave bought and sold in the market? I have observed before that all the circumstances of his trial were such as denoted his appearance to be that of a subject, and not of a slave. And here I rest the argument with respect to his lordship, having gone through all he offered in his own defence, and overlooking the bitter reflexions cast on myself: I have returned him arguments for invectives, reasons for his reproaches, χρύσεα χαλκείων.

But before I take leave of this subject, I must add a word with respect to the author of a letter in the *Flying Post*, Jan. 18. I might very well excuse myself from taking notice of any thing that appears in a paper which has used me and many my betters with the utmost indignity; but as the letter comes from an able hand, and is written in a spirit very different from that of the paper in which it appears, and indeed from that of the bishop's own, I will endeavor to give the author of it all the satisfaction I can; and as I must acknowlege that the good he has said of me is more than I deserve, so I hope to show him the same with respect to his censure on me.

This writer says that my representation of the bishop is very hard and cruel; and that I may agree with him as far as I can, I do own that if his representation of the bishop's meaning in the passage which I quoted be just and fair, that mine is both hard and cruel.

The Bishop of Bangor's proposition is this: "the example of our Lord is much more peculiarly fit to be used to slaves than to subjects." The author of the letter says, with respect to this proposition, that the bishop's sense is, "that the example of Christ is more properly urged to slaves than subjects, in the second chapter of St. Peter." He says again, "the dispute, as I said, is, whether this example be more properly urged on those who are called subjects, in ver. 13. or those who are called slaves, ver. 18." He affirms a third time; "this is not the question," (that is, whether the example of Christ be fit for all,) "but this,—whether in this chapter of St. Peter the example of our Lord Christ be more naturally and properly urged on, and applied to the people mentioned in ver. 13. who are subjects, or to those mentioned ver. 18. who are slaves or servants? This is the matter in question." On this state of the case he says very justly, "that whichever way it be determined, nobody's ears need to tingle at it."

I desire this writer now to consider that his exposition is inconsistent with the bishop's words, which do not affirm with respect to St. Peter, "that the example of Christ is more peculiarly urged (by him) to slaves than to subjects," but do affirm with respect to the nature of the example itself, "that it is much more peculiarly *fit to be* urged to slaves than to subjects." It is true that the dispute he is there engaged in began about the example as urged by St. Peter; but then both sides argue from the nature of the example, in order to limit the application of it by St. Peter, and not *vice versâ*. I desire this writer to attend to the bishop's own account of his adversary's view in arguing from the nature of Christ's example, p. 61. (how truly he represents it, I inquire not:) "but the example of Christ, say you, is more peculiarly fit to be urged to subjects than to slaves; therefore *consequently*, this passage (in St. Peter) in which that example is urged though directed to slaves, yet was designed peculiarly for subjects." Here the reader cannot but observe that the nature of the example is urged (by the bishop's own account) in order to fix St. Peter's meaning, and therefore with respect to the example the dispute was, not what in fact it was applied to by St. Peter, but

to what it is in its own nature more peculiarly applicable. The paragraph in the bishop's book, from whence the quotation in dispute is taken, begins thus: "it is so far from being true that his example was more peculiarly fit to be recommended to subjects considered as such, than to slaves (considered as such,) that I think the very contrary to be evident." The contrary proposition to which is what he has truly and fully expressed in the words which I quoted. And in all this long paragraph he does not once argue from the example as applied by St. Peter, but defends his proposition on general topics; such as our Lord's humiliation, being compared by himself to that of a servant; St. Paul's representing him in the same manner, when he says, 'he took on him the form of a servant;' silence of Scripture, which never compares our Lord's state to that of a subject; the circumstances of his last sufferings, &c. From the nature of the example thus fixed, his lordship makes two observations. The first is, that the difference between the condition of subjects and slaves is so great, that the Apostle St. Peter *must* be supposed to distinguish them. The second is, "that the example of our Lord is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves, by whose condition he is pleased frequently to describe his own low estate, than to subjects, whose condition is never used to that purpose," &c.

And he concludes this paragraph thus: "this I say (that is, the patient suffering of our Saviour) is particularly proper in their case, (viz. slaves,) for this reason, because he is said with respect to his lowest and most miserable condition to have taken on him their form," &c.

So that here the matter in question plainly was, not this,—how St. Peter had applied the example; but this—to which of the two cases the example in its nature was more peculiarly applicable.

And now let the author of the letter consider whether he has not greatly mistaken the true state of the question; whether the occasion I had to express my great dislike of this passage was so very slight; and whether himself has taken the pains requisite "to set the reader right, and to leave him as impartial as a reader ought to be when he would judge aright."

I am sure I have a great deal of reason to wish for my own sake that this writer had read with that impartiality which he has expressed so much concern to preserve to others; and that every reader may see that I had no design to lead him wrong, I will give him the true reason which drew that observation from me.

I did it then to give an undeniable instance of the bishop's running into extremes through opposition, and to induce the reader to consider the true ground on which the present controversy with the bishop stands; for this is the case in almost every article of it; his lordship, not content to oppose what is wrong, suffers his zeal to carry him into very unjustifiable extremes.

Thus:—

1. Because some have laid too much stress on a regular succession of the clergy, and confined the validity of the gospel institutions to it without allowing for cases even of necessity;

Therefore his lordship not troubling himself to consider what regard ought to be paid to a regular succession, and what not, calls it in contempt, "the invention of men," "vain words," "niceties, trifles, dreams."

2. Because some have claimed such a power of excommunication as is indeed inconsistent with the terms of the gospel, and the reason of man;

Therefore his lordship, not concerning himself to show the true use of excommunication in the church of Christ, and thereby to shut out all false claims, exhorts all Christians to act, "without any regard to the outcries of human terror, or the solemn denunciations of any men on earth;" and represents human benedictions, human absolutions, human denunciations, human excommunications, as human engines permitted to work for a time (like other evils) by Providence.

3. Because some claim an unwarrantable power to the governors in the Church over particular members:

Therefore his lordship, not endeavoring to show the just limits of church power, declares there is no power in the church, "that no one of Christ's subjects more than another

hath authority to judge, censure, or punish the servants of another master, in matters relating purely to conscience and salvation."

4. Because some claim an unjustifiable authority to impose articles of faith, and their own interpretations of the Scripture for such, on the Christian people:

Therefore his lordship, not considering that many Christians cannot read, that more of them cannot read the Scriptures without an interpreter, affirms, with respect to all Christians equally, that the Scriptures in necessary points need no interpreter.

5. Because the authority of the magistrate in matters of religion has been often abused, and persecutions have been carried on by the pretence of it:

Therefore his lordship, not endeavoring to state the just limits of the civil authority in this matter, affirms that there is no such authority; and that "if any men on earth have a right to add to the sanctions of Christ's laws—they are so far kings in his stead, and reign in their own kingdom, and not in his:" that is, as he explains it himself in his sermon, they so far take Christ's kingdom out of his hands, and place it in their own.*

6. Because it had been urged to the bishop that temporal encouragements, when rightly applied, do promote true religion:

Therefore his lordship, rather than allow temporal encouragements, when applied in the best manner, to be of any service to true religion, frames a new definition of religion on purpose to throw out temporal encouragements, and affirms that the "belief of another world is what alone renders our best actions religion, from whence they flow, and from whence, when they do not flow, they cease to be religion." †

I call now on every reasonable man to judge whether I had not sufficient and great occasion to make the observation I

* This passage was fully considered in an Answer to a Letter sent to the Rev. Dr. Sherlock; of which the bishop, in his Answer to the Report, has not thought fit to take any notice.

† Answer to the Report, p. 152.

did, of his lordship's being carried into extremes through opposition; and whether I was to blame for choosing an instance out of a controversy of his lordship's, in which I had no hand, and therefore the less prejudice; an instance which appeared to me so flagrant, that I no more thought the bishop would justify his assertion, than I did that he would accuse me of calumny for producing his own words.

But his lordship knows best how to manage his own part of the controversy: if it is for his advantage to draw the eyes of the world from the merits of the cause, and turn them to personal matters, he may go on complaining either with or without cause. Were I to recriminate, I too could give a catalogue of abuses that have been cast on me by his lordship and his friends; but I do not think fit yet to trouble the world with them, and therefore will only give one instance of his lordship's charity towards me, which I should be glad he would explain: I had said "that the Convocation cannot, if they will maintain the trust reposed in them, be silent under such an attack on the rights of the Christian church and the Christian magistrate."* What says his lordship to this? Why truly he says nothing to the trust reposed in the Convocation, but speaks of some particular trust reposed in me; and says, "I do not at all doubt the truth of what you say, that you could not have been silent in Convocation on this occasion, if you would maintain the trust reposed in *you*."†

In the first place I had said nothing of any trust reposed in me particularly, and therefore his lordship is very injurious in representing it to the world as if I had. Secondly, his lordship here allows that I acted according to the trust reposed in me; but he complains often of the Lower House of Convocation for treating him ill, and therefore not according to the trust reposed in them; from which it is evident that his lordship's intention here was to charge me with a private underhand trust; and indeed he took care to fix his meaning so as not to be mistaken by any reader; for he says, "I will never suffer on any account in the world *any such trust* to be *reposed in me* as can

* Answer to a Letter sent to the Reverend Dr. Sherlock.

† Postscript to Sykes.

oblige me to attempt, or assist, or encourage in any degree, in any time to come, the like usage of *you*, or of any man living." Here it is plain beyond contradiction, that by the trust reposed in me, his lordship did not mean a trust common to him and me as members of the Convocation, but some private and particular trust and that too a very dishonest one, else he would not have said that he would never on any account in the world suffer such a trust to be reposed in himself. This is a reflexion which touches to the quick, which dives into the very heart, and fixes the imputation of dishonesty there; it is all invention, and I call on his lordship to show any reason that could move him to suggest to the world that I am so base, so profligate—

I have not perhaps in this controversy treated his lordship with all that deference and submission which he and his friends expect from me; but if all I have said put together amounts to any thing like this reflexion, which at once takes away the reputation of honesty and common morality, I will humble myself to him in the eyes of the world, and publicly ask his pardon.

As to the "numerous misrepresentations;" "the new heap of self contradictions;" "the various and contradictory windings;" "the partial and unjust representations," which his lordship in the abundance of his liberality has bestowed on me in his last little piece; all that I have to say is this, that since his lordship knew me to be so weak, so ignorant a writer, so apt to contradict and misrepresent even myself, methinks, when he thought himself misrepresented by me, common humanity should have led him to charge me rather with ignorance than with calumny.

As to his lordship's complaint that I did not answer every thing written against me before I pretended to step out like a "new writer," I am surprised to hear it from his lordship, who has discretion enough to let some things go unanswered, and particularly Mr. Law's two letters; a writer so considerable, that I know but one good reason why his lordship does not answer him.

But the bishop is at liberty to write as he thinks fit, and so am I. If his lordship expects that I should answer what Mr. Sykes and others are at leisure to write, or even all that his

lordship has inserted in his large Answer at second hand from Mr. Sykes, without taking the least notice of what I had published in my own vindication, he is a very hard taskmaster, and I must complain of him in the words of the slave in Terence, who had been sent on a long fruitless errand only to keep him out of the way—

Edepol næ meam herus esse operam deputat parvi precî.

SUMMARY.

THE bishop is charged with being now engaged in a cause of self-defence, and of reckoning nothing unlawful in such a cause. The dean does not follow him step by step, but goes directly to the points on which his lordship labors to justify his proposition. In the first place the bishop denies his own explication of the word slaves, and proposes a new one. Being sensible that if his explication were suffered to stand, his assertion about the example of Christ must appear shocking to Christians, he labors to get rid of it. Twelve passages produced from the bishop's work to this effect. Ten other passages produced from his lordship's answer to Dr. Atterbury, in which he adjusts the sense of the terms subject and slave. These shown to agree with his explication of the word slaves, and not with the new sense now given to it, and by which he would merely signify the lowest and most helpless part of mankind in their constant condition. This sense shown not to have been, though his lordship affirms it was, in his mind when he made the assertion about the example of Christ, nor when he wrote his answer to Dr. Atterbury, but has been since invented, and first appeared in his Charge of Calumny. This new idea shown not to be a very happy one for his lordship's purpose: for 1. it contradicts St. Peter's notion in the text, which gave occasion to the dispute: 2. it was never true in fact, that slaves were in virtue of their constant condition the lowest and most helpless sort of mankind. Their condition in ancient times is not to be determined by that of slaves in the West Indies. It having been shown how the bishop has mollified one of the terms of

his proposition, it is next shown how he endeavors to clear his whole assertion from having in it any thing offensive to a Christian. His lordship's strength in this case shown to lie in misrepresenting the dean, and the author of a letter before mentioned in this controversy. On the passage of St. Peter there might be the three following points debated: 1. that in fact he applies the example of Christ to slaves: 2. that it is by him properly so employed: 3. that it is more properly so applied than if he had applied it to subjects. The two first take in all that the letter-writer meant and the dean consented to as inoffensive; but the third is the bishop's own sense, which he has put on the dean. Farther arguments against his lordship's doctrine, that the example of Christ belongs to slaves, not merely considered as Christians suffering for righteousness, but as slaves, considered in their slavish capacity in this world. It is shown that neither St. Peter nor any other Apostle proposes the example of Christ thus to slaves. Case of St. Paul in Acts xvi. 37. xxii. 25. considered. The bishop stated to maintain that the way to ascertain the peculiar and proper application of Christ's example is, not by considering what he really, truly, and properly was, but what is said of him by way of figure, allusion, or metaphor. The impropriety of this reasoning shown, particularly with regard to the expression, *form of a servant*, in Phil. ii. An answer to the bishop's argument taken from his own words. Statement of his lordship, that the dean's reproof would fall on the Bishop of Rochester, considered. The learning of this controversy still remains to be considered. Signification attributed by the dean to the words οἰκέτης, δοῦλος, δεσπότης, κύριος, &c. vindicated. Attack on Mr. Sykes. Return to the bishop. His lordship thanked for one explication which he has given; requested to make one more. Conclusion.

THE LORD BISHOP OF BANGOR'S

DEFENCE OF HIS ASSERTION,

NAMELY, THAT THE EXAMPLE OF OUR LORD IS MUCH MORE PECULIARLY FIT TO BE URGED TO SLAVES THAN TO SUBJECTS, CONSIDERED.

DID controversies of this sort deserve the reader's attention, so far as to examine carefully the Bishop of Bangor's representations by comparing them with his own former writings and with mine, I should have no occasion to trouble the world any farther.

His lordship is now in a very extraordinary method; he reckons himself engaged in a cause of self-defence, and writes as if he reckoned nothing unlawful in such a cause.

I shall not follow his lordship step by step, but will go directly to the points on which he labors to justify his proposition.

In order to this, he

1. Denies his own explication of the word slaves, which he had given in the book from whence I produced his proposition; and he proposes a new one, as that which he *constantly* made choice of in treating of the example of Christ in that Book, which yet is not there so much as once mentioned. In order to give the true import of his proposition, I laid down his own explications of the terms of it, and said, "by slaves he means such as are bought in the market, or taken captive; by subjects such as have civil rights and properties, and are not bound by the mere will and pleasure of their kings."*

* Vindication of the Condition, &c.

What now says his lordship to this? Why he tells his reader that I undertake to give his own explications, but in reality do no such thing. This reality is the first and main thing now to be tried, and I wish it could be done without trying some other realities at the same time.

His lordship is sensible that if this explication of his term slave stands good, his assertion about the example of Christ must appear shocking to every Christian; and he owns as much, and says that I have indeed made it appear shocking by this explication of his terms; the consequence of which is, that if the explication be really his lordship's own, and not mine, then his lordship's proposition was really what I represented it to be, and he must be content to take his calumny home again. To avoid this plain consequence, his lordship labors with all his might to get rid of this explication; but it cannot be—*hæret lateri lethalis arundo.*

The reader will best judge what stress his lordship lays on this point by seeing in one view his many pains to be delivered of it. Hear him then.

1. "By slaves, the dean says, I mean slaves properly so called, that is, such as are bought in the market, or taken captive; this seeming very odd when joined with the great name of our blessed Lord, he preserves this particular idea, and puts it at full length, by way of interpretation, into my assertion about our Lord's example; and by the help of it he makes me to have asserted, that the example of our Lord is much more fit for such as are bought and sold in markets, (as if I had spoken of slaves considered under that notion particularly) than for," &c.

2. This his lordship calls a partial definition of his term,

3. And says, it was "choosing that idea which was most for the purpose, instead of that which the asserter (his lordship) himself *constantly* (*N. B.*) chose."

4. "This is the case here. I do indeed, in opposing slaves to subjects, and in stating the difference of their conditions, speak of slaves as bought and sold in the market, or taken captive. But in my assertion relating to the example of Christ, I speak of slaves under the notion of the lowest and

most helpless part of mankind in their constant condition, and by the very nature of their station; and never once on this occasion mention that which was proper only when I was defining the difference between them and subjects. So that though it be literally true that I do on another occasion describe slaves as bought and sold in the market, yet it is as literally true that the word slave, with this idea peculiarly annexed to it, is not any one of the terms of my assertion which the dean so kindly undertakes to explain; but that the notion of slaves in my assertion about our Lord's example, is the notion of persons, the lowest and most helpless, and most miserable of mankind, by the nature even of their daily and constant condition of life."

5. "The notion (of slaves) which alone he (the dean) produces as mine for his own reader—I *never once* (*N. B.*) mention in what relates to our Lord's example."

6. "I have *not once* (*N. B.*) annexed this idea to that word in speaking of our blessed Lord's example."

7. "Which I *never once* (*N. B.*) made use of for this purpose."

8. "An idea which he (the dean) loves to join to the word slaves in this controversy."

9. "As if, because I *once* (*N. B.*) in another part of this dispute described slaves as such (as are bought in markets,) therefore I must always annex this sole idea to that word."

10. "Christ's humiliation may be and is represented in Scripture by the condition of slaves (not considered as bought and sold in the market)."

11. "He did not resemble a slave, in the circumstance of being bought and sold in a market."

12. "I never in this controversy have annexed the two last ideas (bought and sold) to the word slave."

Here you see his lordship affirms five times over (Nos. 4. 5. 6. 7. 12.) that he never *once* used or annexed to the word slave this notion in speaking of the example of Christ, that it is an idea made choice of by me, and that he *constantly* chose another, (No. 3.) that it is literally true that the word slave,

with this idea, is not one of the terms of his proposition (No. 4.), but it is the idea which I love (No. 8.), and which I brought into the controversy.

Here then is a plain fact to be cleared, on which his lordship has put the merits of his cause, and on which I am also willing to put them.

And now I will present the reader with another set of passages taken in their order out of his lordship's answer to Dr. Atterbury, beginning at p. 54. where his lordship enters on the consideration of St. Peter's doctrine, and his application of the example of Christ to slaves. The very first thing he does is to adjust the sense of the terms subject and slave.

1. "We must be led into a plausible discourse of what it was fit for St. Peter to say, and what he did say about slaves, into whose condition that of subjects must be now depressed, though neither taken captive by their kings, nor bought in the market into their service."

2. St. Peter "directs his discourse to slaves properly so called."

3. "It can no more follow from St. Peter's exhorting slaves, than it would follow from your advising slaves in the West-Indies."

4. "And then immediately call on slaves properly so called, and tell them they must patiently bear with their masters who bought them, or took them captive."

5. "Might not the subjects properly so called argue thus? Our condition is very different from that of slaves. We neither were taken captive in a just war, nor bought in the market for the service of our civil governors; therefore it is not at all probable that our teacher should mean to include us in the same discourse with slaves properly so called."

6. "How hard is the fate of subjects, that they must be brought into the condition of slaves; below the state of mercenary servants, into that of servitude properly so called." And a little after—

7. "Now it seems the yoke of slavery itself is not too hard to be brought on them." Again in the same paragraph—

8. "But first, Sir, you should have shown us the price paid

for subjects by their princes, in what market they were bought into their absolute power, or in what just war they forfeited their lives and were taken captive."

9. "But it being always the contrary, I cannot forbear making the two following observations: that there is so essential a difference between civil subjection to governors instituted for the good of the governed, and the servitude of slaves bought by money for the service of their masters, that the Apostle cannot but be supposed to treat so distinctly of them as not to confound their circumstances, which are very different; and likewise that the example of our Lord is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves, by whose condition he is pleased frequently to describe his own low estate, than to subjects, whose condition is never used to that purpose, and whom he is never said to personate in his lowest and most oppressed condition."

10. "Slaves bought with money, or taken captive in the war, may be obliged to bear many things from their masters, which subjects, who were not so purchased, may not be obliged to submit to. The foundation of the two relations is so very different."

His lordship shuts up this whole argument just as he began it, by leaving on the reader's mind the difference between subjects and slaves, as the true point on which the whole turned. His words are—

"St. Peter cannot with the least show of reason be said designedly to speak to subjects under the notion and title of slaves, or to have it in his view to interpret St. Paul's instructions to subjects by directing his discourse to persons of quite another rank."

I desire the reader now to look back to No. 9. in the former passages, where his lordship intimates that he did *once* indeed in this dispute describe slaves to be such as are bought and sold; and if he finds himself so inclined, he may, with all my heart, maintain that his lordship gives a very fair and just account of his dispute.

Let the reader also in these last passages consider those marked 4. 5. 6. 10. and he will see to a demonstration what his lordship means by slaves properly so called. In No. 4.

slaves properly so called are those bought with money or taken captive. In No. 5. subjects properly so called are distinguished from slaves properly so called, because slaves are bought or taken captive.

In No. 6. compared with Nos. 7. 8. (which are all in the same paragraph) servitude properly so called is founded in the price paid. In No. 10. the very *foundation* of the relation between the master and servant is the price paid by the master. And here I cannot but congratulate with myself that *once* in my life I have got into the true meaning of one of his lordship's *properlys;* and this too, I think, may help the reader to understand what his lordship means when he affirms, No. 2. that St. Peter directed his discourse (which takes in all he says about the example of Christ) to slaves properly so called. But to do justice to his lordship, I will consider next the point on which he lays the stress of his defence. He owns, you see, very tenderly, that *once* he did in this dispute consider slaves as bought and sold; (the reader by this time perhaps may be inclined to think he never considered them otherwise;) but he affirms positively that he *never once* so considered them in speaking of the example of Christ, but *constantly* chose another idea, though in truth there is no other idea annexed by him to them in that treatise.

And now let the reader look back to No. 9. in the last set of passages: there he will find that his lordship has fixed and determined this very idea to the word slaves in the very passage, nay in the very sentence out of which I quoted his famous assertion about the example of Christ, and indeed his argument made it necessary he should do so. Of this passage I shall have occasion to speak again. In the meanwhile I observe that his lordship in his dispute with Dr. Atterbury maintains these three assertions principally.

1. That St. Peter's directions for a passive submission were given to slaves, and not to subjects.

2. That St. Peter urges the example of Christ to slaves, and not to subjects. And to prove this the more strongly, he insists,

3. That the example of Christ is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves than to subjects. And now I ask any rea-

sonable man in the world whether these three assertions belonging to one and the same argument, being all of them intended to clear up the doctrine of St. Peter, and having a connexion and dependence on each other, whether (I say) the terms which enter equally into them all, must not have in them all the same signification? His lordship. in explaining the first of these assertions, expressly says that by slaves he means slaves properly so called; that is, as the reader has seen, such as are bought and sold. And if this be the sense of the word slaves in the first assertion, it must needs be so in the second; for it is to the same persons that the example of Christ is urged: and now let the reader judge whether it can mean any thing else in the third.

If you preserve the same idea in the terms of these assertions, then there is a consistency in the argument; and it is coherently said that St. Peter did urge the example of Christ particularly to slaves, because in its own nature the example is peculiarly fit for slaves. But if you give different ideas to the word slaves in one place and in the other, then the argument falls into an absurdity, and will stand thus. St. Peter did urge the example of Christ particularly to slaves properly so called; because the example of Christ, though not peculiarly fit for slaves properly so called, yet is peculiarly fit for something else; which is a way of reasoning which I suppose his lordship would not willingly be thought capable of. His lordship affirms (No. 4. of the first set of passages,) "that though it be literally true that on another occasion he did once describe slaves as bought and sold, yet it is as literally true that the word slave, with this idea peculiarly annexed to it, is not one of the terms of his assertion about the example of Christ." And who now does not see where the secret of this affair lies? His lordship, in considering the sense of St. Peter, branches his argument into three parts, which make the three assertions already mentioned; they are truly parts of one and the same argument. In setting out on this argument, his lordship (as he ought to do) defines his terms subjects and slaves; whichever of the three assertions had stood first in the argument, it would regularly have had the definition or explication with it. In the following assertions, being part of the same argument, there was

no occasion to repeat it. His lordship begins with the doctrine of St. Peter, and under this head defines (as he owns) a slave to be one bought and sold: he proceeds to the other parts of the argument, using the same terms still, without the least intimation that he alters his idea of any one term; which alteration, had it been made, would have destroyed the argument. But being now pressed with a difficulty, he affirms that the idea belongs only to one part of the argument, and not to the other, and says the definition was made on another occasion, and not with respect to the assertion about Christ's example, though the assertion about the example of Christ is part of that argument, for the sake of which, and in the beginning of which, he made the definition. But this is not all; for his lordship does in the very sentence, No. 9. out of which I quote his assertion about the example of Christ, fix the essential difference between a subject and a slave; and he fixes it in this, that governors are instituted for the good of the governed, and slaves are bought by money for the service of their masters.

I appeal now to common sense, whether slaves in the two observations joined together in this one sentence mean one and the same thing or no.

In the first observation, slaves (his lordship expressly tells us) mean such as are bought and sold.

In the second he now tells us something else is meant by that word. *Quo teneam vultus?*

But whoever will observe, will find that his lordship's new evasion is inconsistent with the view he had in this passage; for both his observations are drawn from one common principle: "it being always the contrary," says his lordship, "I cannot forbear making the two following observations." The two following observations then depend on the same truth, that is, the truth of this contrary, whatever it be; consequently the two observations must be *ad idem;* and therefore slaves in the second observation are the same with slaves in the first. But these, his lordship tells us, are such as are bought and sold; or in other words thus: the proposition from which his lordship argues (and which he means by the contrary) is this: "that the Scripture never represents the lowliness of our Lord's condition by the estate of subjects, but always by that of slaves." On this asser-

tion the two observations are built. Now it is evident that no observation about subjects and slaves can be drawn from this one proposition, but only concerning such subjects and such slaves as are meant in this proposition. The terms slaves then in the two observations founded on this one proposition, carry the very same idea. But in the first observation his lordship says they are such as are bought and sold. In the second observation therefore about the example of Christ, they necessarily mean such as are bought and sold.

I shall ouly observe farther on this head, that as his lordship began and carried on this argument with fixing (and often repeating) this idea bought and sold to slaves, so likewise in winding up the argument, and in concluding it, he establishes the same idea, but now he assures us that in one case only in the middle of the argument this idea has nothing to do; nay, he affirms that he *constantly* chose another, and never once made use of this.

Let us then consider now what is the idea which (his lordship says) he constantly chose, and here we shall find that he has got a new idea in just as honorable a method as he got rid of his old one.

But first hear how he sets forth his constant new idea in his last book.

1. "In my assertion relating to the example of Christ, I speak of slaves under the notion of the lowest and most helpless part of mankind in their constant condition."

2. This explication his lordship says, "is not now first alleged, but was plainly delivered and laid down at the very time of making the assertion.

3. "This was the notion I joined to the word slaves in this assertion of mine, and on which I founded the propriety of it." p. 13.—This is in effect repeated again at the bottom of the same page.

4. "Christ's example was of peculiar use to those whom I consider always in the lowest and most helpless condition of human life, by the nature of their station." If the reader desires more instances, let him go on to consult p. 28. 29. 30. 32. 38. 39. 41. 48. 58. 68. 90. for in all these places he

inculcates this notion, it being his only refuge in the present distress.

Here now is another plain matter of fact to be discussed. His lordship affirms (Nos. 2. 3.) that this was his notion of the word slave at the very time he made the assertion about the example of Christ; that is, it was his notion when he wrote against Dr. Atterbury, and not only so, but that it was *constantly* his notion.

In answer to this I do affirm that this notion never appeared, nor are there any traces of it to be found in his answer to Dr. Atterbury; but it is since invented, and first appeared in his Charge of Calumny.

But how can this be, you will say. Does not his lordship, at pages 15 and 16 of his last book, produce no less than seven instances to show that this was his notion in the original passage? It seems so to be; and that I may be sure not to injure him, see here what he says at length.

"It will be proper to show the reader that my own words, in the original passage, from whence the dean ought to have taken my true meaning, agree with the account of I have now given of it. In my late Vindication of myself from his injury, I produce that whole passage out of my former dispute; so that I need only refer to what the reader will find in that little piece. In the quotation there made, it will be seen that I expressed myself thus: 'our Lord's voluntary humiliation is compared to that of a servant.' Again, 'when his lowest estate is described, the allusion is made to the circumstances of a servant.' 'When St. Paul is to give the liveliest representation of his condescension and humility, it is done in these words, He took on him the form of a servant, or slave.' Again, the lowliness of our Lord's condition is the thing spoken of. Again, 'by whose condition he is pleased to describe his own low estate.' Again, 'he is said, with respect to his lowest and most miserable condition, to have taken on him their form; and under that humble appearance to have suffered, &c.' After this I add, as one of the foundations of what I have said, 'that the New Testament represents the humiliation and low estate of Christ in this world by the condition of slaves, the lowest and most helpless part of mankind.'"

Here are some very material things to be observed on this quotation. 1. His lordship proposes to show his own words in the original passage, from whence, he says, the dean ought to have taken his true meaning. 2. He chooses to refer to his original passage as it is transcribed into his Charge of Calumny, and not as it stands in the answer to Dr. Atterbury. And for this there was some reason, as will appear.

3. He refers the reader to p. 10-13. of the Charge of Calumny, as containing the original passage, out of which he is to produce his own words; and the last quotation being in the last of the said pages, is thus introduced: "after this I add, as one of the foundations of what I have said, that the New Testament represents the humiliation, &c." And here I ask the reader whether he did not think that these quotations, one and all, were parts of the original passage, as recited in the Charge of Calumny, beginning at page 10. and ending page 13. and particularly, whether he did not think the last quotation followed that immediately preceding in the same original passage? I wish every reader would answer these questions to himself before he goes any farther.

Let us now see what the truth of this case is. The six quotations first produced are indeed in the original passage; but then they are nothing to the purpose. They all speak of the low estate of Christ, in respect of which he was (as his lordship says) compared to a slave, without any the least intimation of that idea of slaves which the bishop says he constantly chose. But is there not a seventh quotation? Yes, there is, and very much to his lordship's purpose; but the misfortune is, that there is not one word of it in the original passage. Has his lordship then made a false quotation? Hold, Sir, no more calumny, I beseech you. This seventh quotation is truly in page 13. of the Charge of Calumny, as is also part of the original passage. And now the reader sees a reason for the quotations being taken, not out of the original passage as it stands in its own place, the Answer to Dr. Atterbury, but as transferred into the Charge of Calumny; for had his lordship quoted the Answer to Dr. Atterbury, and named the pages, 64. 65. 66. all the world would have seen that his new idea drawn from page 13. of a book written several years after it, had

nothing to do with the original passage. But now I believe every reader did (as I profess I did for some time) take it otherwise. With what tolerable degree of fairness could his lordship insinuate that I ought to have taken his meaning from this passage? Can the most partial reader allow him to say that I ought to take his meaning, not from the book whence I took his assertion, but from an after explication of his lordship's when he found himself pressed, and was forced to coin a new exposition of his word, because he could not, together with the old one, maintain his assertion.

The state of the matter, in short, is this. His lordship enters on these quotations, professing to give his true meaning from the original passage; from whence, he says, I ought to have taken it; and concludes his quotations by telling us that in the last of them was to be found one of the foundations of what he had said. The quotations being made, his lordship goes on to consider them in one view, to show the reader what he means by slaves, "whom," says his lordship, "I consider always in the lowest and most helpless condition," &c.; and he had most expressly assured us before (see No. 2. of the third set of passages) that this explication was not now first alleged, but was plainly laid down at the very time of making the assertion. These things considered, could any one possibly imagine that the only quotation in the whole number which at all relates to his exposition of the word slave, was no part of the original passage, was never thought on at the time when his assertion was made, but was invented afterwards, not as the foundation, but as the palliation of his assertion? Yet this is the case—*Hæ tibi erunt artes*. If this be self-defence, then let me be defenceless; let his lordship triumph, and let his admirers go on to boast that he is unanswerable; for on this foot his lordship will soon find that he may write without an adversary.

But farther, when his lordship professed to state his true meaning of the word slave from what was to be found in the original passage, inserted in his Charge of Calumny, and went through pages 10. 11. 12. 13. to pick up every thing to his purpose; how came he to overlook the only passage that is to the purpose, when it stared him full in the face? For in p. 11. you must know, slaves are described in words at length to be

such as are bought with money for the service of their master. This passage, which fully describes his notion of a slave, at the time of making his assertion, and which is in the same sentence with the assertion; his lordship—what shall I say?—artfully drops, and quotes six others nothing to the purpose; and then, to make amends, puts on the reader a quotation describing slaves indeed according to his present wish, but which is no part of the original passage. This too, I suppose, is self-defence.

As to this new idea of slaves, be it true or be it false, it is nothing to me; for it had no being when I first produced his lordship's assertion about the example of Christ, and was for so doing charged with calumny; but whether I was justly chargeable or not must be tried by considering the assertion as it then stood, and not as it has been since mollified by a new exposition. His lordship may do what he will with his slaves, and give them one character to day and another to morrow; but I hope I shall be allowed the common privilege of subjects, and not be called to trial or condemnation by a law made *ex post facto*.

And yet this new idea is not a very happy one for his lordship's purpose. Slaves, we are now told, are, in virtue of their constant condition, the lowest and most helpless part of mankind; but the proper notion of a slave, as distinguished from a subject, is that of one who has no rights, and his lordship's controversy turned on this precise idea; for the very reason with his lordship why slaves are bound to greater submission than subjects is, that slaves have no civil rights to protect them, but subjects have. And in this view there is a real perpetual difference between subjects and slaves. But with respect to the new idea of slaves, that they are the lowest and most helpless, &c. the case is quite otherwise. For,

1. This contradicts St. Peter's notion in the text, which gave occasion to the dispute. He plainly makes a distinction between the slaves who had good and gentle masters, and those who had severe and hard masters, and supposes the former to be under no such difficulties as the latter. So that to make all slaves alike in virtue of their constant condition, overthrows the very foundation on which the Apostle's doctrine is built.

2. It was never true in fact that slaves were, in virtue of their constant condition, the lowest and most helpless sort of mankind. Ancient history gives another account of them; you may find them in all countries often at the head of affairs, as well in kingdoms as in private families. They were intrusted with the care and instruction of their masters' children, and with the management of their estates; and we meet with them frequently employed in affairs of the greatest consequence to the public; whilst in every country many subjects were in a more distressed and low condition than the better sort of slaves. This difference was universally seen. Hence the poet,

Ὡς κρεῖττόν ἐστι δεσπότου χρηστοῦ τυχεῖν
Ἢ ζῆν ταπεινῶς καὶ κακῶς ἐλεύθερον.*

Nay, freedom was not always to a slave a change for the better, as we learn from another poet:

Πολλοὶ φυγόντες δεσπότας, ἐλεύθεροι
Ὄντες, πάλιν ζητοῦσι τὴν αὐτὴν φάτνην. †

His lordship indeed, as I guess by an expression which fell from him in his dispute, seems to have had all his intelligence about slaves from the West Indies; and he might have added to his new idea, if he had thought fit, on the same authority, that all the slaves of antiquity were negroes.

I have gone through that part of his lordship's defence in which he places his great strength, and have shown that there is nothing but weakness in it, and shall now take leave of it in few words.

His lordship owns that his assertion does appear shocking, if the idea of bought and sold, &c. does belong to the term slaves.

I have shown, beyond denial, that this idea does and must belong to it; that his lordship not only *once* (as he says) described slaves in this manner, but often in this manner, and never in any other, in the original dispute.

I have shown also that the idea of slaves which his lordship says he *constantly* made choice of in speaking of the example

* Dicta Poetarum, &c. per Grotium. † Ibid.

of Christ, and which (he says too) was plainly laid down at the very time of making his assertion, is not once to be found in the original dispute; and that the only passage quoted by his lordship, which has this idea in it, is not (whatever his lordship intended his reader should understand) in the original passage, but is first to be found in the Charge of Calumny.

Take notice, *this is my defence.* Let his lordship clear these facts, and I have done.

The reader having now seen in what manner his lordship has endeavored to mollify one of the terms of his proposition, it may not be amiss to show him how he endeavors to clear his whole assertion from having any thing in it offensive to a Christian. In order to this, his lordship maintains that there is no difference as to the indignity offered to our Saviour's example, between saying that St. Peter does in one particular instance apply the example of Christ directly to slaves, and saying in general that the example of Christ is (in its own nature) much more peculiarly fit for slaves than for subjects.

This relates to the shockingness of the assertion; on which head his lordship, I think, is hardly serious; for at p. 89. he supposes all the blame to lie on the single word slave; and at p. 93. he seems to find out that all the shockingness is placed on the peculiar fitness of Christ's example, &c. All that I can say in this case is, to promise his lordship never to answer such arguments. His lordship sometimes divides his paragraphs into propositions; sometimes his propositions into single words or expressions,* making a show to defend by piece-meal what in the whole he finds to be indefensible.

But his lordship's strength in this case lies in misrepresenting not only me, but, I think too, an author who appeared with an early concern in his behalf. The author of a letter (mentioned already in this controversy) states the dispute between the Bishop of Rochester and of Bangor about the example of Christ, to be merely on the interpretation of St. Peter. These are his words—"the Bishop of Rochester took that side of the question which proposes the example of Christ to be more properly urged by St. Peter to subjects than to slaves; and the

* See Answer to the Representation, p. 145.

Bishop of Bangor takes the other side." That is, as I understood and do still understand these words, the question was, which was the properest interpretation of St. Peter, to say that the example was by him proposed to slaves—or to subjects: this, I said, whichever way it be determined, nobody's ears need tingle at it. And now the Bishop of Bangor serving himself of a little ambiguity in the words 'properly urged,' represents me as allowing it to be a just way of speaking, to say that St. Peter did more naturally and properly in urging the example of Christ to slaves, than if he had urged it to subjects. This little fallacy is spread through pages 93. 94. and part of 95.

Take away this ambiguity, and his lordship's reasoning falls. On this passage of St. Peter, there might be these three points debated.

1. That in fact he applies the example to slaves.
2. That it is by him properly so applied.
3. That it is more properly so applied than if he had applied it to subjects.

The two first take in all, I think, that the letter-writer meant; I am sure, all that I consented to as an inoffensive way of speaking. But the third is the Bishop of Bangor's sense which he has put on me. I have now explained myself, and let his lordship draw out his assertion and my concession into columns, and see what advantage he can make of them compared together. His lordship has not only misrepresented me, but his zealous friend too, who had deserved at his hands at least better usage; though his lordship seems not pleased that he had no ill usage at my hands. If this author, whoever he is, can take any pleasure in seeing the use the Bishop of Bangor has made of his letter, I hope his satisfaction in the bishop's triumphs will not be less for not being disturbed by my complaints. But of this enough.

From the images and ideas of his lordship's proposition, I will go next to the doctrine with which he still maintains his assertion. And here, though his lordship owns that the example of Christ belongs to subjects merely as Christians, suffering for righteousness, and not as subjects considered in their political capacity; yet he affirms (very absurdly) that the example

of Christ belongs to slaves not considered merely as Christians suffering for righteousness, but as slaves considered in their slavish capacity in this world.

There is one passage which will give us his lordship's sense in this matter, and the reason on which he founds it. "I was carried to it (that is, the assertion about the example of Christ,) because I found that the Apostles did propose it in their directions particularly applied to slaves, spoken to under that character; and did not propose it in their directions to subjects, expressly spoken to as subjects."

The argument, you see, is, that the Apostles, in speaking to slaves as slaves, applied the example to them. His lordship's expression here is something obscure; but he must mean that the Apostles have urged the example of Christ to slaves as slaves, or else what he says is nothing to the point in hand.

What his lordship means by this phrase ('as slaves') will appear from his own explication of the same phrase in the other case: "a Christian who suffered merely as a Christian, suffered for something which he had peculiarly as he was a Christian:" therefore to propose the example to slaves as slaves, is to propose it to them on account of something which they have peculiarly as they are slaves.

Now then we are come to a point, and I absolutely deny that St. Peter or any other Apostle proposes the example of Christ to slaves in this manner. St. Peter (the only Apostle expressly appealed to by his lordship) is so far from doing it, that he has industriously avoided it. He knew that the profession of the gospel would expose servants to hard usage from hard unbelieving masters, therefore he tells them, 'this is thankworthy if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.' Here is now the kind and manner of suffering expressly described, to which St. Peter applies the example of Christ; and what is there in it peculiar to slaves? Does it belong to slaves peculiarly to endure grief for conscience' sake toward God? Have the martyrs and confessors of all times been slaves? Or if they have not, how is this kind and manner of suffering peculiar to slaves? St. Peter goes on: 'for what glory is it if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?' But, says the Apostle, 'if when you do

well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ,' &c. Here it is plain beyond contradiction that the sufferings to which St. Peter exhorts servants, and in the case of which he applies the example of Christ, are such sufferings as the gospel had called them to; I ask his lordship whether the gospel had called them to be slaves, or to suffer as slaves? If not, then the example of Christ is not proposed to them by St. Peter as slaves, or as suffering slaves; but properly and peculiarly as Christians, suffering according to their call, for righteousness' sake. This will appear farther by considering the true import of these words—'if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently.' What is here called 'taking it patiently,' is the very same thing as 'enduring grief,' ver. 19.: both the expressions (ὑποφέρειν λύπας and πάσχοντα ὑπομένειν) signify a steady resolution and constancy of mind in bearing afflictions, a courage that rather chooses to suffer than to do wrong; and not only, as an English reader perhaps may take it, a meekness and quietness under unavoidable evils. But you will say, can slaves choose whether they will suffer or no? I answer, yes, when they suffer for righteousness' sake; for it is evident that when a slave suffers for being a Christian, he has it in his power by renouncing Christianity to avoid suffering; but if he, for conscience' sake towards God, chooses (ὑποφέρειν λύπας, πάσχοντα ὑπομένειν) to 'endure grief,' then it is that he does as he was called to do, and as his Saviour did before him; then it is that the example of Christ is applicable to his sufferings. It is plainly to these circumstances in suffering that St. Peter applies the example of Christ, and therefore it is highly absurd to say that St. Peter proposes the example to slaves as slaves; whereas he proposes it to them no otherwise than as the gospel has proposed to all mankind when they suffer for righteousness' sake, that is, as Christians. With respect to any other sort of suffering, I will be bold to say that the example is no more peculiarly fit for slaves than for men under the gout or the stone. Fit it is for all who suffer in some respect, as it may teach all patience and submission to the will of God; but the peculiar and proper application of it belongs only to Christians suffering for righteousness' sake.

This account shows what it is to suffer as a Christian, of which his lordship seems to me to have no distinct notion; and the case of St. Paul, which has often been urged by his lordship, and is now urged by him, makes this account still harder to be understood. St. Paul, we are told, suffered as a subject, Acts xvi. 37. xxii. 25. If he did, I must profess myself not to know what it is to suffer as a Christian; for in both cases St. Paul suffered only for doing the work of an Apostle of Christ; and that, one would willingly hope, is suffering as a Christian. Well then, if St. Paul did in this case suffer as a Christian, why did he not endure grief without pleading his civil rights to exempt himself for it? The reason is plain, because he could do it and did do it without departing from the truth of Christ; and since he could avoid suffering without any prejudice to the cause of righteousness, he had liberty so to do. His lordship, I suppose, will not affirm that we ought to seek after sufferings, when we can enjoy our religion without them.

The truth of the case is this. Where men suffer temporal evils for temporal causes; where the contest is for power, honor, or wealth, or for rights, privileges, and property; whatever they do or suffer in such causes, they do and suffer as men and subjects: nor is the example of Christ (nor his lordship's much-loved instance of St. Paul) a proper rule to adjust and determine such cases and pretensions. And this is equally true with respect to subjects and slaves considered as such; but where duty to God is the matter in question, and men have this only choice, either to suffer or to renounce their duty to God; whoever in this case chooses to suffer for conscience' sake towards God, he is indeed a sufferer for righteousness' sake, he is a follower of the blessed Jesus, be he either subject or slave. This, I say, is the truth of the case, and let his lordship, if he can, produce one text, one example of Scripture, or one good argument to show that slaves any more than subjects have the example of Christ proposed to them, as peculiarly proper to their condition considered as slaves, and not as Christians suffering for righteousness' sake. What his lordship has already produced shall next be considered.

His lordship maintains that the way to ascertain the peculiar and proper application of Christ's example, is, not by consider-

ing what he really and truly and properly was, but by considering what is said of him by way of figure, allusion, or metaphor.

One of his lordship's reasons for his assertion was this: "that the New Testament itself represents the humiliation of Christ by the condition of slaves." His lordship was not pleased to tell us where in the New Testament this was to be found. To such a general argument then, there was no way of replying but by an induction of particulars, and showing that our Lord was not so represented either in his birth, in his life, or in his suffering. This I undertook to do; and the bishop now complains grievously that I did so; and says that I "greatly mistake, or greatly injure him; that he never thought of representing our blessed Lord as really a slave," &c. When there is a scarcity of argument, a complaint is a good relief; were it not so, his lordship would have had no occasion for it here; for I never charged him with saying that our Lord was really a slave; I answer directly to his affirmation, that the New Testament represents, &c. and show his lordship in all the great circumstances of our Saviour's life and death, that no such representation is to be found. His lordship, instead of proving that there is such a representation to be found, amuses his reader with a complaint of mistakes and injuries; and thus the reader is made angry, I am blamed, his lordship is pitied, and the argument is dropped.

But let us try once more if we can have better luck. His lordship now (and in truth he did so before) denies "that our Saviour was really a slave, or looked on himself as such, or any thing like to this." He has elsewhere told us that Christ was no king of this world. If therefore there was any thing real in his condition in this world, since he was neither king nor slave, he was really and truly and properly a subject to the civil power where he lived.

But though he was really no slave, yet his lordship does insist on it, as the necessary foundation of his assertion, that his humiliation was represented by the condition of slaves. But then he tells that all this was figurative, and said only in a figurative style. So again: "all this shows—that our Lord was said figuratively in his infinite condescension" (a fine ac-

count of infinite condescension, that it consisted in figures and tropes) "to take on him the form of a slave." This same account is often repeated.

Now then let us see what is the original assertion which is to be supported by this argument; was it not this, that the example of Christ is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves than subjects? Lay all this together then.

Christ was really no slave, but really and truly as to his condition in this world a subject.

But his infinite condescension is described by figures, allusions, or metaphors taken from the condition of slaves.

Therefore his example is much more peculiarly fit for slaves than for subjects.

By the same argument you may prove that our Lord's example is much more peculiarly fit for such as keep sheep than for the preachers of the gospel. For Christ was really a preacher of the gospel; but he is by way of figure represented as a shepherd; therefore his example is much more peculiarly fit for shepherds than for preachers of the gospel.

I am sorry to find that his lordship reckons that our Saviour took on him the form of a servant (which is St. Paul's expression, Phil. ii.) figuratively: the consequence, I fear, must be that he had the form of God figuratively too; for I think there is no doubt but that the two expressions (*μορφὴ Θεοῦ* and *μορφὴ δούλου*) both signify something real, or both something figurative. Perhaps his lordship did not attend to this consequence, and I do not charge it to his account.

On this text of the Philippians I had observed that the form of a servant being opposed to the form of God, denoted that form or character of servitude by which every creature is essentially distinguished from the Creator, and not any servitude peculiar to any one condition of life. This must needs be, if by taking on him the form of a servant we understand, as all writers except Socinians do understand, that the Word was incarnate, and becamc man; for by becoming man he became no otherwise a servant than as all men are servants; and who are all men bound to serve but only God? On this foot there is a gradual descent in the Apostle's representation of our lord's humility. Being in the form of God, he took the form of a

servant, and that not the highest form neither, for he was made in the likeness of men; and being man, he submitted to death, nay, to the worst kind of death, the death of the cross. But according to his lordship's exposition, the Apostle first reduces him to a servile condition, then raises him again to the common condition of men, in order to lower him again to the death of the cross. I do not intend to enter into a nice discussion of this text. Let the reader consult Bishop Bull or Bishop Pearson, and he will find that I have said nothing new on this text. The latter thus expresses the sense I gave of the Apostle's words. "When he (our Lord) appeared in public, he lived after the manner of a prophet, and a doctor sent from God, accompanied with a family, as it were, of his Apostles, whose master he professed himself, subject to the commands of no man in that office, and obedient only unto God. The form then of a servant, which he took on him, must consist in something distinct from his sufferings, or submission unto men; as the condition in which he was when he so submitted and so suffered." The *judicious* Mr. Sykes quotes this very page of Bishop Pearson, and tells us "that the bishop never once intimates the meaning of them (that is, of these words, the form of a servant) to be as signifying the servant of God:" and yet in the very passage he quotes, the form of a servant is expounded by the likeness of men. Let this worthy person then tell us, what is that servitude which every man is under, and which yet respects another master besides God.

His lordship in this argument has often repeated it as of moment to his cause that our Saviour's condition is not represented by the estate of subjects; that the illustration of his humility is not taken from the condition of a civil subject. But since his lordship has now been so good as to answer this difficulty himself, I beg leave to transcribe his words: "certainly our blessed Lord's condition or behavior may be thus represented (that is, by the condition of slaves); and yet this representation be far from being designed to extend to it in all respects. It cannot be thus figuratively represented, without the constant supposition of its not being really so."

If therefore the representation or illustration of a man's condition is taken from some condition which is not the man's

real condition, it is evident why our Lord's condition is not illustrated by representations taken from the estate of subjects, because his real condition was that of a subject. And this, I hope, I may call a good answer, since it is his lordship's own.

There is one argument more which indeed I did not expect from his lordship. I was told before that the calumny would fall on the Apostles, and the reproach would reach St. Paul: this, however, is pretty well over. But now I am told that the reproof will fall on the Bishop of Rochester, of whom his lordship is now become a great admirer.

——Quod Divum promittere nemo
Auderet, volvenda dies en attulit ultro!

The Bishop of Rochester (whose name wants not the support of any epithets from his lordship's hand or from mine) cannot, I think, but have the same resentment of his lordship's new favors to him that all the world besides has. It was out of respect to his name that I industriously avoided to bring him into this controversy, that I might not renew the memory of the treatment he had found, or expose him again to an indignation which knew no bounds.

But since the Bishop of Bangor is now particularly content to suffer in such good company, I must beg of him to consider what an unhappy choice he has made, not in my judgment indeed, but in his own. Let him call to mind his own censure of Dr. Atterbury in this very case, in which he now desires to suffer with him: his lordship, I suppose, may have forgotten it, and therefore I shall present him with his own words: "Yet is this example still triumphantly urged in this controversy, but ever without taking notice of what has been said on it, and without considering what *injustice* is done to that blessed and glorious person whose example it is. I pray God forgive those who make use of it." Thus did Mr. Hoadley accuse Dr. Atterbury; but now it seems the Bishop of Bangor is very desirous to suffer in company with the Bishop of Rochester; and to avoid my censure, he is very earnest to fall under his own. I tell the bishop that his assertion will make the ears of a Christian tingle; he tells Dr. Atterbury that he does great injustice to our blessed Lord; and immediately lifting up his hands

and eyes, in print he prays God to forgive him. Where now is the difference, unless it be in this only? My charge is plain speaking; his lordship's is put into a form of prayer; the censure is heightened by the devotion, and made ten times more mischievous by being conveyed under the sweet odors of Christian charity.

But how his lordship can pretend that his assertion about the example of Christ, and the Bishop of Rochester's, are alike, is another surprise. The Bishop of Rochester's words are these: "Christi exemplo quasi ob oculos posito; quod certe ad miseram subditorum quam servorum conditionem propius accedit: non enim privati cujuspiam domini jussu, sed summi magistratus nutu, flagris cæsus, ludibrio habitus, colaphis percussus, morti addictus est Christus. Exemplum itaque subditis potissimum utile reliquit, ut sequerentur vestigia ejus." Con. ad Cler. p. 18.

It is plain here, 1. that the Bishop of Rochester does not apply the example to subjects chiefly as subjects; for he applies to them not merely as subjects, but as suffering subjects; and that he reasons in a natural way, and says the example of Christ is of use to those chiefly who are in the circumstances in which our Lord himself was.

But the Bishop of Bangor argues in a way the reverse to this, and says the example is much more peculiarly fit for those whose condition our Lord never was in, unless by way of figure or allusion; for he truly was a subject, and suffered in that capacity.

2. The Bishop of Rochester's position has nothing shocking; there is nothing offensive in saying that Christ's example is of use to subjects chiefly.

But the Bishop of Bangor's assertion is in this respect of another kind.

3. No ill use can be made of the Bishop of Rochester's assertion: slavery is now no more among Christians, in these parts of the world at least; he therefore who says the example is of use to subjects chiefly, says that it is of use chiefly to all Christians now in being.

But the Bishop of Bangor, who says it is much more peculiarly fit for slaves, does in effect say that it is much more

peculiarly fit for that sort of Christians who are now ceased from among men, than for any who are left in being.

4. No Christian can exempt himself from the obligation of following the example of Christ by what the Bishop of Rochester says of it.

But any refractory perverse Christian may apply the Bishop of Bangor's assertion to ill purposes; and when he is urged with the example of Christ, he may reply that he is a subject, and the example is much more peculiarly fit for slaves.

Thus the case stands in the comparison, and let the reader judge whether both assertions are alike. As to the nature and use of the example I have already declared my mind, and I see no reason to alter it.

But the learning of this controversy is still behind. I wish the little Greek which I had occasion to use had been less offensive to his lordship; and that he had not found it necessary twice in one page to remind the reader that the dean had Stephens' Thesaurus before him. His lordship, I do perceive, wants no such assistance; in all the Greek he has quoted, I find no signs of his ever having any lexicon before him. But I will give his lordship no offence, and will only show that his observations do not reach the point in dispute.

I observed from the natural signification of the word *οἰκέται*, that St. Peter had not slaves peculiarly in his lordship's sense before him; that is, he did not speak merely to such as were bought for the service of their master, but to all whether bought, hired, or born in the family; to all who were under subjection, by whatever ties they were so, to the master of the house. To support this, I observed farther, that as the Apostle had in speaking to these made choice of a word properly denoting the governed part of a family; so in speaking of masters also, he chose a word properly denoting the masters of a family; that is, he called them *δεσπόται*, not *κύριοι*. His lordship considers this last observation first, and wonders I did not avoid it, because *δεσπότης*, he says, imports a higher power than *κύριος*. I wish his lordship had given us his evidence for this. But be that as it will, let the words imply severally what power you please, I still affirm that *δεσπότης* is properly and in common language the master of a family. It is indeed sometimes trans-

lated to other purposes: kings are called δεσπόται, because kingdoms are considered as great families; and kingly government arose from paternal government. So God is sometimes termed δεσπότης, because the whole world is the house or family of God. But κύριος is not peculiar to domestic government, and carries in it the notion of a full and absolute power and authority over either persons or things; as appears so frequently in the best writers, that there is no occasion to produce instances. And here his lordship's *learned* and *judicious* friend Mr. Sykes, happily mistaking my meaning, has confirmed what I said; for he tells us that δεσπότης is the proper correlate to οἰκέτης. He has produced indeed a lame proof for his opinion; but his assertion is right, though he was led into it by one mistake, and justifies it by another.

The next thing his lordship finds fault with is, my saying that οἰκέτης signifies domestics of all sorts, and not slaves peculiarly. His lordship here has been at some pains to produce instances where οἰκέτης does signify a slave. But what is this to me? I never said it did not. What I affirmed was, that it did not signify slaves only, peculiarly, but others also. So that his lordship's instances are nothing to the purpose, but his judgment is; for he thinks that οἰκέτης "is used for a slave without any variation in profane authors." Were it a point worth taking pains about, I might, I believe, produce twenty authors who have used it for domestics of all sorts; but I will content myself with such authorities as have readily offered themselves. In the eighth book of Herodotus, (p. 473. edit. Gronov.) you have an account of the naval force of Greece set out to encounter Xerxes; the Platæans were absent, being employed in transporting their families to a secure place. Οἱ Πλαταιέες ἀποβάντες ἐς τὴν περαίην τῆς Βοιωτίης χώρης, πρὸς ἐκκομιδὴν ἐτράποντο τῶν οἰκετέων. In such cases, I suppose, men do not use to take care of their slaves only, and therefore the οἰκέται must include domestics of all sorts. So again, p. 478. ἡμεῖς μὲν ὡς ἔχομεν ἀναλαβόντες τοὺς οἰκέτας κομιεύμεθα ἐς Σίριν τὴν ἐν Ἰταλίῃ. These οἰκέται were in the page before expressly said to be τέκνα τε καὶ γυναῖκες, their wives and children. Again, p. 493. in the story of Hermotimus and Panionius, there is an undeniable instance of the same use of the word. Hermotimus persuades Panio-

nius to remove his family, *τοὺς οἰκέτας*. Panionius consents, and the historian tells us that he did accordingly remove *τὰ τέκνα καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα*, his children and his wife.

The next I will produce is Xenophon, who in the fourth book de Exped. Cyri, (p. 333. Edit. per Leuncl. 1625.) twice uses the word in this large sense. One passage is this : *τοὺς δὲ οἰκέτας καταλείπει τῷ Κωμάρχῃ, πλὴν τοῦ υἱοῦ ἄρτι ἡβάσκοντος.* All the *οἰκέται* were left, you see, except only the son ; the son therefore is reckoned among the *οἰκέται*. His lordship may see another passage in the very first page of the Cyropædia ; and I have before me three or four more to the same purpose, but I will not burden the reader with quotations.

Aristophanes has the word in the same sense in the beginning of his Nubes—*Οἱ δ' οἰκέται ῥέγκουσιν.* Here the scholiast tells us—*Οἰκέτας δὲ νῦν οὐ τοὺς θεράποντας μόνον λέγει, ἀλλὰ πάντας τοὺς κατὰ τὴν οἰκίαν.*

The same use of the word occurs in Lucian: I will mention but one instance out of the first book of his Vera Historia, p. 387. (folio) : *ὁρμηθεὶς δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς πατρίδος μετὰ παιδὸς* (cum filio) *ὃν ὁρᾶτε, καὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν οἰκετῶν ἔπλεον εἰς Ἰταλίαν.*

As *οἰκέτης* is thus used by the best writers, so *οἰκετικὸς*, derived from it, retains the same general signification. Dionys. Halicar. l. 3. p. 176. speaking of Tullus Hostilius, says, *τελευτᾷ τὸν βίον ἐμπρησθείσης τῆς οἰκίας—καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ γυνὴ ἀπόλλυται, καὶ ὁ ἄλλος ἅπας οἰκετικὸς ὄχλος.* The wife being here reckoned as part of the *οἰκετικὸς ὄχλος*, it is evident the expression takes in all the family, and not merely such as were slaves.

His lordship perhaps may object that St Peter's style was not formed on such writers as these ; I beg leave therefore to tell him from Athenæus, that the word had the same use in common speech ; *ὅτι δὲ οἰκέτης ἐστὶν ὁ κατὰ τὴν οἰκίαν διατρίβων, κἂν ἐλεύθερος ᾖ, κοινόν.* lib. 6. p. 267.

These authorities, I hope, may reconcile his lordship a little to the etymologists and commentators, and incline him to believe that they are not altogether so impertinent and unsupported in what they say as he thought they were.

His lordship observes farther that in St. Peter's application of Christ's example to them, (that is, slaves,) the expression (he should have said *one* expression) made use of is, ' By whose

stripes, *οὗ τῷ μώλωπι*, ye were healed;' and he seems to think that the word stripes has reference to the common punishment of slaves. But why so? Were only slaves healed by our Lord's stripes? And if others were no less, how can this expression relate to slaves particularly? But the misfortune is, that this expression is not originally St. Peter's, but is quoted by him from the liii. of Isaiah, where surely it had no particular relation to slaves. And if his lordship will look into the Greek Concordance for *δέρω* and *πληγὴ*, he will find that stripes were not only used by masters as the punishment of slaves, but what Christians were taught to expect, and which the Apostles frequently underwent, and St. Paul in particular, who says of himself, that he was *ἐν πληγαῖς ὑπερβαλλόντως*, 2 Cor. xi. 23. His lordship too may find that *κολαφίζομαι* is used by the same Apostle to express his own sufferings and those of the other Apostles, 1 Cor. iv. 11.

His lordship at p. 77. returns to criticism again, and obliges us with an account of the foundation of figures of speech; the upshot of which is with respect to the present argument, that wherever *δοῦλος* is used, it signifies a slave properly so called, whether in common language or in figurative language: the criticism which his lordship has ventured at (as he expresses himself) he will find very hard to make good. But to keep to the point before us. That *δοῦλος* signifies always in common language a slave properly so called, I can by no means allow; whoever serves another (*δουλεύει*) in any degree, is so far *δοῦλος*, whether he be his slave, his hired servant, his son, his freedman, his relation, or his friend. In all these senses I find the word used without any suspicion of a figure lurking in the expression. *Δουλεύειν δι' ἀγάπης* is natural proper language in Greek, as much as to serve a man out of love or friendship is proper English; and both may be used without supposing that ever there was such a thing as slavery in the world. Let me add that if his lordship's observation is just, that wherever *δοῦλος*, or which is the same thing in Latin, *servus* is used, it signifies a slave properly, that is, one bought or taken captive; that then by parity of reason *dominus*, the correlate to *servus*, must signify, whenever it is used, one who is properly lord and master of another; that is, one who either took him captive or

bought him. Now *dominus*, as his lordship will find, is used by the best writers, not only of kings with respect to subjects, and masters to servants, but of any superiors to inferiors; of husbands to wives; of parents to children; of teachers to scholars; nay of equals, of brothers to brothers, and of one person to another in the civility of common conversation, and sometimes even of servants to masters. I leave it to his lordship to apply his criticism in all these cases, and to show that *dominus* signifies lord and master properly so called; and when he has justified his criticism throughout the uses of this single word, I will readily allow it him in any other.

I am sorry indeed to see the use his lordship makes of his criticism; and though I would not willingly offend him again, yet I cannot but observe how ready he is to introduce new language into Christianity in support of his assertion, when he tells us that "he who, being a freeman with respect to civil rights, is converted into Christianity, becomes the slave of Christ." This is indeed a very strong figure, and must be diluted by a very gentle exposition. I should be glad to hear a good reason from his lordship for his not rendering δοῦλος by the word servant, and for our translators not rendering it by the word slave, as his lordship knows they never do; and for which, it is presumed, men of their great learning saw very good reason.

But I must take leave of the bishop for a while, to pay my respects to one who is, in his lordship's account, "a very worthy, learned, and judicious writer," Mr. Sykes. This gentleman has thrust himself into this controversy to show the world that he is as good a Grecian as he is a reasoner, and that nothing is too hard for his digestion that comes from the hand of the Bishop of Bangor. Were not this the case, I think he would not have been in such haste to share with his lordship the honor of his assertion, "that the example of Christ is much more peculiarly fit to be urged to slaves than to subjects."

This gentleman's learning too is introduced with a sneer at Stephens' Thesaurus; so that I perceive a lexicon is equally a jest with his lordship and his friend. But to make us amends, he refers us to Chrysippus for the usual signification of the words οἰκέτης and δοῦλος: and here in the heat of his Greek

forgetting the cause of his master, who had asserted that δοῦλος signified a slave, and carried with it the same idea that slave now does,* this acute gentleman proves that δοῦλος is not a slave, but *one made free*. As this notion of δοῦλος is contrary to all use of language, and is truly stoical, so the authority on which it is grounded is that of the Stoic Chrysippus, (though possibly that might be more than Mr. Sykes knew,) who well deserved the character which Tully gave of Zeno, *non tam rerum inventor fuit quam novorum verborum*. He was so famous in this way, that Lucian, in raillery, allots fourscore years as necessary to be spent in the study of Chrysippus. The passage quoted by Mr. Sykes from the scholiast on Theocritus, is this, δοῦλος καὶ οἰκέτης διαφέρει, ὡς φησὶ Χρύσιππος· οἰκέτης μὲν ὁ ἔτι ὑπὸ κτῆσιν ὤν· δοῦλος δὲ ἀπελεύθερος.

Mr. Sykes's translation of this passage is very extraordinary. Thus it stands: "δοῦλος and οἰκέτης differ as Chrysippus says; οἰκέτης signifies one who is still part of the possession or estate of his master, but δοῦλος one made free." The subject and the predicate are here made to change places, which must be owing either to Mr. Sykes's skill in logic or in Greek; and by this means we are told that δοῦλος (a slave) signifies *one made free*. Mr. Sykes, I am sure, has made free with Chrysippus, who had too much sense to say what is now put into his mouth. The philosopher's assertion is, that a freed man (ἀπελεύθερος) is still a servant, in respect to the service owing still to his master and patron. But Mr. Sykes makes him say that a slave signifies *one made free;* and yet this judicious person had the true sense of the passage before him in English, and has inserted it in the very same page of his learned performance which is beautified with this accurate translation. But as to Chrysippus's notion, it is more fully reported by Athenæus, l. 6. p. 267. διαφέρειν δὲ φησὶ Χρύσιππος δοῦλον οἰκέτου, γράφων ἐν δευτέρῳ περὶ ὁμονοίας, διὰ τὸ τοὺς ἀπελευθέρους μὲν, δούλους ἔτι εἶναι, οἰκέτας δὲ [τοὺς] μὴ, τῆς κτήσεως ἀφειμένους· ὁ γὰρ οἰκέτης φησὶ δοῦλός ἐστι κτήσει κατατεταγμένος. I have distinguished the words as they ought to be read, leaving out the [τοὺς]. The sense is, that freed men are still δοῦλοι, but not οἰκέται, being

* Charge of Calumny.

no longer in possession of their masters. Now if any weight were to be laid on this authority, it is plainly not on that side for which Mr. Sykes produces it; for, first, it is evident that Chrysippus considers the word *οἰκέτης* in one sense of it only, as it signified a domestic servant; had the word been capable of twenty more significations, yet in stating the difference between the several sorts of servitude, no other sense could have come under consideration. There is nothing then in this passage to show that *οἰκέτης* never signifies any thing but a slave. Secondly, it is evident that *δοῦλος* is not by this writer confined to signify a slave strictly speaking; for the very notion of *ἀπελεύθερος*, a freed man, is, that he is freed from servitude strictly speaking. The stoics, as we learn from Diogenes Laertius in the life of Zeno, reckoned three sorts of servitude: the second was *ἐν ὑποτάξει*, the third *ἐν κτήσει καὶ ὑποτάξει*; of these two sorts Chrysippus here speaks. His freed man was still *ἐν ὑποτάξει*, being obliged to some services to his patron; but the *οἰκέτης* was one actually of the family, and not only in subjection, but likewise in the possession of his master, and had his name from his necessary relation to his master's house. But the truth is as I have already hinted it to be. It was a stoical notion that all *excepto sapiente* were *δοῦλοι*; and to justify their doctrine, the stoics refined mightily on the word *δοῦλος*. So likewise they taught that their wise man was *βασιλεὺς*, a king; and if I should say that *βασιλεὺς* signifies one who ruled over a country, Mr. Sykes might with as good reason tell me I was mistaken, and quote Zeno or Chrysippus to prove that *βασιλεὺς* properly signifies a wise mau. But be it as it will, if Chrysippus's authority be good, it is good against the bishop and Mr. Sykes; if it be not good, then it is nothing at all to the purpose.

Mr. Sykes in his next piece of learning was a little unhappy; he met, I suppose, in the index to Grotius, with *οἰκετικὴ διάθεσις*, and the reference unluckily led him to the third of the Maccabees, (not *Macchabees*, as he spells it,) which happening not to be translated either in our English Bible, or in the vulgar Latin, Mr. Sykes was hard put to it for a nominative case to his verb; and searching after it, he mistook Antiochus

for Ptolemy Philopater, and so fathers the story on Antiochus, who had nothing to do in it.

The third essay is still worse than the two first. He quotes Ammonius for these words, *δοῦλοι καὶ οἰκέται διαφέρουσι. Δοῦλοι μὲν γάρ εἰσι καὶ οἱ τῶν ἡδονῶν, καὶ πάντες οἱ ὑποτεταγμένοι ὑπὸ βασιλέα. Οἰκέται δὲ δεσποτῶν.* And he translates them thus: "all that are servants of a king, even those that are the ministers of his pleasures, are called *δοῦλοι*, but *οἰκέται* are the slaves of lords." One would hardly think that so many blunders could be crowded into so few words. First, he takes *ὑποτεταγμένοι ὑπὸ βασιλέα* to be 'servants of a king,' that is, such as are in his immediate service, as is plain by his adding "even those that are the ministers of his pleasures." 2. He inverts the order, and makes *οἱ τῶν ἡδονῶν* follow the *καὶ πάντες*, &c. as if contained under it. 3. *Οἱ τῶν ἡδονῶν* are the ministers of the king's pleasures. 4. The word slaves after *οἰκέται* is his own addition. 5. He renders *δεσποτῶν lords.* The true meaning of Ammonius is this: the word *δοῦλοι* is used (not only of the servants of masters) but of those also who are slaves to their pleasures, and of all who are in subjection to a king; but *οἰκέται* is always relative to *δεσπότας*. Thomas Magister has given us the same account of the two words, *δοῦλοι οἱ ταῖς ἡδοναῖς κάτοχοι, καὶ ὑποτασσόμενοι βασιλεῦσιν οἰκέται δὲ δεσποτῶν.* Here the sense is, if possible, more clearly expressed; and if Mr. Sykes had had any acquaintance with the classic writers or ancient philosophers, he would have known the meaning of *δοῦλοι ἡδονῶν*. His stoic Chrysippus particularly would have told him that all but their wise men are slaves, because they are slaves to their passions and pleasures. But these slaves to their own passions are in such favor with Mr. Sykes, that he has preferred them all to court, and made them ministers to a king.

Again, *οἱ ὑποτεταγμένοι ὑπὸ βασιλέα* are not servants about a king, but such as are in subjection to a king; and the word *δοῦλοι* is perpetually used by Greek writers in this sense. And in opposition to monarchical government, those who lived under other forms were called free, *ἐλεύθεροι*. Thus Herodotus, in the very beginning of his history, tells us that Crœsus was *βαρ-*

βάρων πρώτος, who made (some of) the Greeks tributary—for before his time, πάντες ἦσαν ἐλεύθεροι, 'they were all free.' The same notion was common among the Latin writers; the very first line in Tacitus has it, *urbem Romam a principio reges habuere. Libertatem et consulatum L. Brutus instituit.* Had Mr. Sykes had any knowlege of this, he would not have crowded his king with as many servants as he had subjects.

But οἰκέται are 'the slaves of lords.' Mr. Sykes is still himself; and we are beholden to him now for lords, as we were before for the king's ministers. What Ammonius means is this, that οἰκέται always have relation to δεσπόται; you cannot transfer the word to any thing else; you cannot say οἰκέται ἡδονῶν: you cannot call those who are under kingly government οἰκέται βασιλέως; but whenever οἰκέτης is used, it always has relation to δεσπότης, and therefore δεσπότης must needs resign the patent of honor which Mr. Sykes has granted him; for we know very well that every master of a house, whatever his quality be, is δεσπότης, and his servant, whether bought or hired, or born in his family, is οἰκέτης.

The next passage is from Theophilus, lib. iii. tit. 18. *de stipulatione servorum.* Instead of this passage ill applied, and yet much worse translated by Mr. Sykes, I will give him another from Theophilus in lieu of his from Chrysippus. Theophilus having divided men into δοῦλοι and ἐλεύθεροι, says the ἐλεύθεροι are either εὐγενεῖς or ἀπελεύθεροι, lib. i. tit. 3. Let Mr. Sykes now compare the stoic and the civilian, and tell us whether the ἀπελεύθεροι for the future shall be with him slaves or no. For myself, I have determined this point, that when the two words, δοῦλος and ἀπελεύθερος, are opposed, δοῦλος does signify in the strict sense a slave; but when δοῦλος is predicated of ἀπελεύθερος, it is only in respect to the small service he was still under, which was so little, that I shall always think that none but a stoic would have said on the account of it, that a freedman was still δοῦλος.

But our *learned* and *judicious* author goes on, and the next passage has in it such a due proportion of Greek and logic, that it is hard to say which is most to be commended, his learning or his judgment. I must remind the reader that I had taken notice that St. Peter's οἰκέται did not mean only slaves

properly so called, but domestics; and therefore he called the masters, not κύριοι, but δεσπόται, δεσπόται being the proper correlate to οἰκέται, as it siguifies domestics.

This, Mr. Sykes tells us, is one blunder made worse by another. How so, I beseech you? Why, mind his reasons: δεσπότης, he says, is the proper correlate to οἰκέτης. I daresay this worthy gentleman did not blunder on purpose that he might be on my side; and therefore I would advise him not to write again till he knows his side; *Quod opust me advocato? qui utri sim advocatus nescio.* The quotation from Ammonius which follows this shrewd remark is nothing to the purpose; for though it is brought to prove that δεσπότης is the proper correlate to οἰκέτης, yet there is no mention of οἰκέτης in it. Δεσπότης ὁ τῶν ἀργυρωνήτων, καὶ κύριος. The last words καὶ κύριος seem to have nothing to do here; so that I think Mr. Sykes may take home his lord once more. But then that worthy person supposes ἀργυρώνητοι and οἰκέται to be the same, which is begging the question. All the ἀργυρώνητοι were οἰκέται, and therefore it was proper to say δεσπότης ἀργυρωνήτων; but all the οἰκέται were not ἀργυρώνητοι.

But for once I am willing to help Mr. Sykes, and let him know how he might have made the quotation to his purpose, by showing that Ammonius by ἀργυρώνητοι did probably mean οἰκέται, since in another place, according to him, οἰκέτης is ὁ δοῦλος ὁ ὠνητὸς; not that it can from hence be inferred, as I have said, that all οἰκέται are ἀργυρώνητοι, though all ἀργυρώνητοι were οἰκέται.

It follows in the quotation, κύριος δὲ καὶ πατὴρ υἱοῦ, καὶ αὐτός τις ἑαυτοῦ· which Mr. Sykes renders thus, 'but even a father is said to be κύριος of his son; and a man,' &c. *Even* a father! Why who should be κύριος of a son, if not a father? Why then *even* a father? As if a father had less to do with his own son than another. We had once before the same mistake; *even* those that are the ministers of his pleasures. If Mr. Sykes does not know how to construe two καὶ that come together, I think he should give over Greek; and yet this great accuracy is followed by a smart wipe for Stephens' Thesaurus; but if he had looked into it, he would have found, *ubi* καὶ *bis ponitur, prius abundat;* not that this rule is always without exception.

And now let the reader judge whether this *learned* person has not more occasion to use a lexicon than to laugh at one.

The reader must have observed that δοῦλος was in high favor with Mr. Sykes a little while ago, and signified nothing less than 'one made free.' But within a page or two he is again 'the very lowest of all;' and this too is founded on such a piece of criticism as is a plain demonstration how much he hates a lexicon. I had observed that δοῦλος and διάκονος were used in the tenth of St. Mark as equivalent words; but Mr. Sykes says, "if words can express a difference, there is a plain one." The words are these, ver. 43. 44. 45. ὃς ἐὰν θέλῃ γενέσθαι μέγας ἐν ὑμῖν, ἔσται διάκονος ὑμῶν. Καὶ ὃς ἂν θέλῃ ὑμῶν γενέσθαι πρῶτος, ἔσται πάντων δοῦλος. Καὶ γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθε διακονηθῆναι, ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι. What says Mr. Sykes now? Why, he affirms that the same difference as there is between *great* (μέγας) and *chiefest* (πρῶτος), there is likewise between δοῦλος and διάκονος, *lowest* and *low*: if any will be great, let him be διάκονος; if greatest, let him be δοῦλος, the very lowest of all. *Acumen hominis!* But if he liked this antithesis, he should have placed it where it truly lies on the word πάντων: he that will be greatest (of all), let him be πάντων δοῦλος, a servant to all. There had been something in this: but his present criticism is absurd, and contradicts the language of St. Mark in the chapter before, where the same thing is thus expressed, εἴ τις θέλει πρῶτος εἶναι, ἔσται πάντων ἔσχατος, καὶ πάντων διάκονος· ix. 35. where πάντων διάκονος answers directly to πάντων δοῦλος, in the tenth chapter; so that now I hope δοῦλος and διάκονος will pass with Mr. Sykes for words equivalent in St. Mark, at least.

This worthy person has bestowed hard words on me in his English as well as in his Greek: among other things he has charged me with a nameless book, but without showing any more authority for so doing, than he had to charge Antiochus with the persecution of the Jews in the third of the Maccabees. Once more I bid this gentleman adieu, and he is now again at liberty to write, without being interrupted by me, what he pleases, and in what language he pleases; though if I might advise him, he should not meddle in Greek again till he has conquered his aversion to a lexicon.

I return to his lordship, in whose last performance I found so many hard things said of me, so many contradictions and absurdities laid to my charge, that I have been often tempted, and am still, to do myself justice, and to show the world — but still it recurs to my thoughts, what cares the world for all this? I am now sensible that those few words in Terence, which I learned when I was a boy, *populus id curat scilicet*, have spoiled me for a writer of controversy.

I shall only then thank his lordship for one explication he has given us, and desire him, the next opportunity he has, to give us one more. I thank him for telling me that when he intimated that I had a trust reposed in me, he only meant that I had undertaken particularly for myself, without imputing to me by that expression any dishonesty in so doing, or so much as implying that I was moved to it by personal resentment. His lordship says, all this by a very easy and natural figure of speech may be said to be a trust reposed in me; I wish his lordship would take this instance, and make good his criticism, that in figures of speech all words preserve their natural and plain signification: however, if his lordship is satisfied with this explication, I am.

The new explication which I would desire is of a passage in p. 97. "And for this my Preservative is quoted; a book which I truly thought he would rather have chosen not to have named in this controversy, for some reasons which I need not mention to him." Now I profess to his lordship there was great need to mention to me these reasons, for in truth I am utterly a stranger to them. His lordship once before threatened us with a secret history; I suppose these reasons may make a part of it, and I beg his lordship to produce it, and not to go on with insinuations that have no ground or foundation. If after this his lordship does not produce his secret history, I shall think myself at liberty to say that he dares not do it.

I now submit this part of the controversy to the reader's judgment: it shall not be in his lordship's power by misrepresenting either my words or his own, to draw me into it again. Whatever his lordship may be, the world, I am persuaded, is tired of such altercations, as I am sure I am.

SUMMARY.

SECTION I.

PRELIMINARY observations. A reason given for the bishop's resentment. Several very visible mistakes in the dean's Vindication discovered by his lordship; these arranged under five heads. The bishop's first observation: "When the corporation act was made, many of those ministers, who afterwards dissented, were in possession of their livings, and had been declared by the king himself, but a few months before, to be persons full of zeal for the peace of church and state. Those particular non-conformists, who were followers of these men, could hardly be designed so soon to be excluded from any offices merely in order to the preservation of the public peace," &c. The dean's answer to this. The bishop's second argument; viz. "The test act was particularly and peculiarly levelled at papists, and not at non-conformists in general; nor at all at protestant dissenters, against whom the dean now so strenuously urges it," &c. This argument answered. Third observation: "The exclusion of non-conformists of all sorts was not the certain intention of either of these acts, and undoubtedly not of the latter:" this answered. His lordship's fourth reason, "that there could be no such resolution in the legislature as the dean mentions, because the receiving of the communion according to the usage of the church of England, cannot imply that the person who so receives it is well affected to the ecclesiastical establishment," &c. Reply to this observation. Fifth and last observation of the bishop on this head, "that a true

and real concern for the peace of church and state does not always imply in it so much as a conformity, in any one act of communion, with the church which happens to be established in any country," &c. The dean's answer to this.

SECTION II.

The second thing to be considered; viz. whether receiving the sacrament according to the church of England, be a proper test to distinguish those who are and those who are not well affected to the established church. This shown to be so. Objection made by the bishop, that many non-conformists do sometimes receive in the church of England, and yet are not well affected to it. This argument stated to have been several times repeated, and instances adduced. Shown to be of no consequence at all with respect to the corporation act. Its fallacy exposed with regard to the test act: to try the force of his lordship's reasoning, it is applied to a case. Another argument or article noticed, which appears four or five times in this section, against an observation of the dean, that receiving the sacrament, &c. was enjoined as the most probable evidence of a man's being sincerely well affected to the established church.

SECTION III.

This section stated to contain nothing which has not been considered, except that in the title the word demonstration is to be met with in different characters, a sure sign that there is but very little to follow it. In order to this demonstration it is said there were two methods of compassing the end which the dean ascribes to these acts; yet in the next page it is stated that these two must be joined together to make one effectual method. Observations on the first method; observations on the second.

SECTION IV.

Complaint of the bishop that the dean imputes to him, that he supposes barely receiving the sacrament to be the test required by those acts. The dean's apology if he mistook his lordship. The dean had affirmed that the test lies *chiefly* on these words of the act, *according to the usage and rites of the church of England?* His lordship's remark on this; the dean's answer. Another observation made by the dean was, that receiving the sacrament is not the qualification for an office within the intent of the act, but only the proof of it, &c. His lordship's remarks on this, with the dean's replies annexed. The bishop's original charge against these laws being, that they were an abuse of the sacrament, &c. the dean showed that they were not chargeable with so much impiety, &c. adding an observation, the argument of which has been mistaken by the bishop: reply to this intentionally omitted. The bishop's next attack stated to be on the use made of two statutes of James I. Answers to his observations in both these cases. The dean indignantly repels all insinuations made against him as counterfeiting the laws of the land. Notice of a bill, passed in the first year of Queen Anne, for preventing occasional conformity; whence it is evident that both Lords and Commons do agree that for any person to receive the sacrament for an office, and afterwards to resort to conventicles, was contrary to the intent and meaning of the laws requiring the sacramental test. A consideration of the state of dissenters before the toleration and since; which will enable any one to determine this part of the controversy.

SECTION V.

That nothing might pass unanswered which fell from the dean's pen, his lordship is stated as giving a new meaning even to the occasional act. The dean had observed that "when

the doctrine of occasional conformity for places prevailed, it broke in on the evidence required by the corporation and test acts, just as the doctrine of equivocation and mental reservation broke in on the evidence of an oath. In answer to this the bishop says, "that receiving in the church is no evidence of constant communion with it," which has been already considered: and he concludes "that the act of occasionally receiving gave the evidence required by the test act." The contrary to this has been asserted both by Lords and Commons, in their preambles to an occasional bill, anno 1702. Concluding observations on this subject by the dean.

PREFACE.

THE reader perhaps may expect that I should say something in answer to the bishop's representation of me, as a great dealer in contradictions and self-murdering propositions, as having not only a tendency, but even a gravitation to inconsistency. But to enter into a justification of my own abilities is a work which I will never suffer his lordship to impose on me by the severest of his reflexions; and he may write secure from the danger of a reply, when he brings a charge which cannot, consistently with the common rules of decency, be either refuted or returned.

I submit therefore to my burden; but it is with the satisfaction of seeing that his lordship's resentment is too strong to do much harm; for whilst he discovers in every thing I say multitudes of self-contradictions and heaps of inconsistencies, he shows as plainly to what they are to be ascribed, as a man proclaims his own distemper when he affirms all things about him to be yellow. I am not insensible of my own failings, and that I often want correction; but that every step in the Vindication should be attended with palpable inconsistencies is not very reconcilable with its being the most plausible and ingenious defence that, his lordship thinks, has ever yet been published, &c.

But though I can submit to his lordship's severity, when only my understanding is called in question, yet there are some things of another nature, to which I desire to be heard a few words. One is a charge of personal rudeness. I had, in the Vindication of the Corporation and Test Acts, observed that the argument I was engaged in was such, that no man would have it in his power to suggest that I was bribed by the prospect of honors and preferments: I thought his lordship of all

men living the least liable to mistake my meaning, considering how lately I had been told by his friend Mr. Sykes, in a book which his lordship honored with a preface, that by the church I meant only the goods and revenues of the church. But instead of this plain, natural, and true reference of the words, his lordship has drawn them into a reflexion on himself, and is pleased to suppose that I meant to insinuate that he was bribed by the prospect of preferments; and on this imagination he grounds an appeal to my conscience, and a charge of personal rudeness. My conscience, I assure his lordship, tells me the words are innocent of the meaning laid to them; and whatever my thoughts were as to his lordship's inducements to begin and carry on this controversy in the manner he has done, yet in that passage I had no eye to them. Personal rudeness was indeed concerned in this matter; but I am afraid his lordship's resentments will cool now he sees who is answerable for it.

The next is a charge still of a higher nature; a charge in which his lordship is not principal, but appears only as a second to Mr. Peirce, whose words, he says, I have most grossly misunderstood and misrepresented, in a manner hardly ever seen before; that being admonished, I still continued the abuse in all the editions of my book; and though I have so little sense of shame for myself, his lordship adds that good and reasonable Christians will blush for me.

Had his lordship been describing the most profligate degree of shamelessness, he could not, I think, have laid on stronger colors. I shall make no other return to this, which may justly be called unparalleled usage, than to show the reader what ground there is for it. Mr. Peirce, I suppose, will be allowed to know his own meaning as well as his lordship; I will therefore transcribe his own defence of himself, and leave it with a few observations to the reader's judgment.

Mr. Peirce speaks thus:*—

"'Among the rest,' says the dean, 'Dr. Snape seems to have been in this mistake; but by this time I presume he is convinced of his error, since Mr. Peirce has told him how highly affronting to the dissenters such an opinion of them is.' And

* Some Reflexions on Dean Sherlock's Vindication, p. 38.

here he cites what I say to the doctor—'How could you suggest that we do not so much as pretend the terms of your communion are sinful?' Since the dean has said nothing against this passage, I need not say any thing in defence of it.

"Speaking then farther concerning me, he says; 'and he goes on to give instances of sinful terms of our communion; and then, in the name of all his brethren, he passes a judgment that makes the whole ecclesiastical constitution sinful'—'You may depend on it that the great body of the dissenters judge the terms of communion sinfully imposed.'

"Which words I readily own, and will justify, if there be occasion."

Hitherto no harm is done, no misrepresentation complained of. Let us hear Mr. Peirce farther.

"He (the dean) goes on, making this remark on my words: 'This strikes not at one, or at many of our terms of communion, but at the whole establishment.' All the unscriptural terms of communion, I grant, it strikes at. 'The foundation itself is sin, and nothing good can be raised on it.'

"If by the foundation he means the principle on which they act, namely, that they have power of adding terms of communion over and above what Christ has appointed, I own the foundation is wrong, and nothing good can be raised on it; however there may by the same men on another and better foundation, the Scriptures. The superstructure is only so far evil, as it is not built on that foundation."

In this paragraph likewise we are still agreed. The foundation, that is, the principle on which the church acts in requiring any thing of its members not expressly required in Scripture, (as kneeling at the sacrament for instance,) is sin. This consequence Mr. Peirce owns and defends; and I stand clear hitherto of any misrepresentation of his sense.

It follows in Mr. Peirce.

"He adds: 'and therefore he very frankly and consistently declares, 'we rejoice to see the foundations shaken, and the fabric sinking, as we never doubted but it would some time or other.'"

"This passage, as the dean has placed it, may easily be misapplied by the reader. I therefore desire he would observe that

I am there speaking against people's being led by an implicit faith in men; and for their governing their faith and practice by the word of God as the only rule. I then tell the doctor, this is what we have always professed; and I am much mistaken, if we are likely to be moved by any reasons you have brought to the contrary. We cannot see the cause of slavery thrives under your management, which is a mean defence against a noble and brave opposition. We rejoice to see the foundations shaken, &c. Nor can I see why the dean should be offended either with my hopes or triumphs, on the prevailing of true and generous principles; especially when it is under the management of so bright an ornament of his own communion."

Here we begin to differ, and Mr. Peirce thinks his words may be misapplied as they are placed in my book: a very modest charge compared to the bishop's outcry! But let us see what account Mr. Peirce gives us of the foundations he beheld shaken.

He was speaking, he says, "against people's being led by an implicit faith in men; and for their governing their faith and practice by the word of God as the only rule;" and he concludes that he cannot see why the dean should be offended either with his hopes or triumphs, on the prevailing of true and generous principles.

It is to be observed here that Mr. Peirce changes the ideas quite; which is not answering but shifting the charge. He was to tell us what he meant by rejoicing to see foundations shaken; and he answers that he rejoices to see true principles prevail. This is not to the purpose: the question is, what were the foundations which in his prophetic dream he beheld shaking, and what the ground of his joy in their approaching ruin. Look into his first book, and you will find that churches, councils, and convocations, were the sinking fabrics. In the very passage from which I quoted his words, "he is glad to see men seek to govern their faith and practice, not by the great names of men, churches, councils, convocations, or assemblies; but by the only rule, the word of God:" and he presently adds, "we rejoice to see the foundations shaken, and the fabric sinking." What now was the fabric that was sinking? Was it not the authority of men, churches,

councils, and convocations; which, it seems, can no more prescribe rules for men's practice or behavior in the church than they can make a new faith? And Mr. Peirce thinks the generous principle of refusing all obedience to churches, councils, and convocations, is now prevailing "under the management of a bright ornament of our own communion;" and tells us frankly, that he and his brethren the dissenters look on "rejoicing to see the foundations shaken, and the fabric sinking." How right Mr. Peirce may be in his judgment of our weak and tottering condition, I will not inquire; but I say again, what hopes, what triumphs are these!

But let us attend to Mr. Peirce's farther complaints.

" 'But to go on,' adds the dean, 'he charges the church with persecution;' I wish there was no cause for the charge; 'and all who differ from the Bishop of Bangor in the present controversy as maintainers of it.' Nor has the dean been able to prove they are not.

" 'Agreeably to which he represents the dissenters as the holy remnant that have not bowed the knee to Baal: so that the church of England in this comparison (and should seem therefore in this gentleman's opinion) is an idolatress, and her priests are the priests of Baal.'

"This is not a just representation of my sense; though I do not much complain of him, since he has used me much better than he has the Bishop of Bangor. Those words have no relation to the church of England in particular. The case is thus: Mr. Pilloniere had complained of the smallness of the number of those protestants in general, who had gone on the true and only defensible principle of the reformation, that is, who were against persecution; and among others, he seemed to me to reckon the dissenters to be friends to persecution. He expressed likewise his judgment that the extreme smallness of the number of those who were for toleration and against persecution, was the only reason why the reformed religion did not more prevail in the world. Now when I had asserted that the dissenters declared for toleration, I added, 'and I hope it will be a comfort to him, who complains of the smallness of the number of those who go on the true and only defensible ground of the reformation, to hear that God has reserved to

himself, I do not say seven, but many times seven thousand who have not bowed the knee, &c.' I did not so much as put in the word Baal; and when it is added, it is evident that only persecution (which is a great idol with some men) is compared with Baal. And as one half of those whom Mr. Pilloniere commends as being against persecution, are of the church of England, and must be manifestly joined with those who have not bowed the knee, so the charge cannot be understood as brought against the church of England in general, but only against those in that or any other church who are for persecution. And therefore his complaint of me here, and again, p. 43. where he renews it, is wholly groundless."*

I have inserted this passage at large, that I may be sure of not injuring Mr. Peirce. And now I desire the reader to observe, 1. that Mr. Peirce does not deny that he charged the church of England with persecution. 2. He owns that in his comparison, the idol persecution is meant by Baal. This is all that I charged him with, and this is all confessed: it remains only to be considered what ground there was for the consequence I deduced from these positions, namely, that this comparison represented the church of England as an idolatress, and her priests as the priests of Baal. If in this I drew a false consequence, I should be glad to have it shown to be so by Mr. Peirce, or the bishop for him. The consequence stands thus:

The priests of that church which sets up an idol, are priests of that idol.

But the church of England sets up the idol Baal (persecution.)

Therefore the priests of the church of England are priests of Baal.

Mr. Peirce says farther that his words ('who have not bowed the knee, &c.') have no relation to the church of England in particular; very true, for I think he meant to charge all established churches that are or ever were; but is the reflexion therefore the less injurious to the church of England? Is it any consolation to us to be told that the churches of Christ, from the days of Constantine at least, have bowed the knee to Baal?

* See Vol. iv. p. 451-2.

To as little purpose is it that Mr. Peirce tells us afterwards that he did not mean the church of England in general, and proves it, because Mr. Pilloniere had commended some of the church as being against persecution; for though Mr. Peirce himself excepts the bishop of Bangor and some others from his charge, yet in this very explication of himself he still thinks there is ground enough to continue the charge of persecution against the church.

I am willing to leave it to any impartial man to judge what Mr. Peirce could mean, when after having (in his first book) laid persecution to the charge of the church of England, he proceeds to vindicate the dissenters against the like charge, and says they had not bowed the knee, &c. Is not this a strong implication that the church which he pronounced guilty had bowed the knee to Baal? Can the character given to dissenters and some protestants abroad, merely on supposing them clear of the crime imputed to the church, amount to any thing less than fixing the reverse of that character on the church of England? Does not the very application of this passage of Scripture to the present case infer this charge? The holy remnant, who had not bowed the knee to Baal, were distinguished from the idolatrous Israelites: in the comparison the dissenters are the holy remnant; they are therefore distinguished from the idolatrous crowd of persecutors. Ask now Mr. Peirce who they are, and he will still tell you that the church of England is a persecuting church.

He pleads, I know, for himself that he did not so much as put in the word Baal, but only said, 'they had not bowed the knee, &c.'

An unhappy excuse in my opinion; for it plainly shows that Mr. Peirce saw how the reflexion pointed; why else did he not put in the word Baal? or where was the modesty in leaving it out? His not expressing the word is an evidence that he was conscious of the foulness of the charge it carried with it; and his leaving out a word so easily supplied by every reader is no justification.

Were it necessary to show Mr. Peirce's opinion in this matter, we have evidence enough in a book reprinted since this controversy; it is a light thing with him to charge the church

with schismatical rage, and her bishops with tyranny and cruelty; but I have no design to draw on a new controversy with this gentleman; what I have now said has been forced from me by a very vile accusation. As to Mr. Peirce, I would only, before I take leave, express to him my great concern to see in his late writings so much bitterness of spirit against the church after thirty years' indulgence to non-conformists. These are not the ways of peace, nor are they the fruits which were expected from the toleration.

I have now shown the reader what ground there was for this violent attack on me; and I very willingly submit it to every good and reasonable Christian to judge for whose sake he ought to blush. His lordship had reason, and therefore I join with him in leaving the modest, the blushing part to others; for such is either my crime, or such is his lordship's charge, that, whichever of us shall appear to be guilty, he must at the same time appear to be incapable of blushing for himself.

But to draw towards a conclusion.

His lordship in his introduction has given us four or five reasons to justify the practice of writing publicly against the laws of the country; and according to his wonted goodness, he has repeated them again towards the close of his book.

I question very much whether such liberty was ever allowed in any well settled government, or whether any can be safe and easy which does allow it. There are proper ways for men to seek redress against legal hardships, without complaining to the people from the press, of the iniquity and injustice of the laws; which is downright libelling the government. And if this liberty must be reckoned among the common rights of subjects, the case of governors is really to be pitied. As for his lordship, all the world knows that he has not wanted frequent opportunities of lodging any complaints of this nature in a proper place; and why he chose rather to appeal to the people, and to call the passions and the interests of the multitude to his assistance, is not yet accounted for in any of the reasons with which he has obliged us.

Besides, it is one thing to open the nature and the effects of any law, and in proper language to represent the inconveniences which experience has discovered; and another to charge

the legislature with violence, iniquity, and the oppression of the common rights of subjects; and to proclaim to the people that the legislature were so estranged from the consideration of justice and equity, that they proceeded on "the pleasing presumption that all preferments and places of trust and influence ought to be engrossed by those who feel themselves to have power enough to engross them."

But farther; there is a difference likewise between writing against a particular law, as founded in a mistake, or liable to inconveniences, and writing against the very power and authority itself from which the law flows; and this is his lordship's case. He is not content with saying that the laws for the establishment of the church are improper, but with a high hand he declares to the world that all civil laws relating to the church are incroachments on Christ, and the product of an usurped authority; and that "no human laws can have a proper authority over men considered as creatures capable of religion."

Our first reformers did indeed mislike the laws made for the support of popery; but so far they were from disowning the authority of the state in religious matters, that restoring the supremacy to the crown was the first step, and the foundation of our reformation. But his lordship not only mislikes the laws now in being, but even the authority by which they are made: and whenever his reformation prevails, it must begin with divesting the legislature of their assumed authority, and in restoring to every man the supremacy in his own behalf:—a wild conceit, which his lordship cherishes and is fond of as if it were the whole of his gospel.

This is his lordship's method of writing against the laws of the constitution; and if he means to justify it, he must find other reasons, for those already given come not up to the point.

I have nothing more to add, but to give the reader in few words an account of the following sheets.

The present controversy consists of three very distinct points.

1. To inquire what is the true meaning and intention of the laws which are the subject of this debate.

2. Whether the intention ascribed to them be in itself just and equitable.

3. Whether the means made use of to compass this intention are justifiable.

At present I examine the first point only, as that which is the foundation of the whole. The other parts will follow in a reasonable time, and probably both together; for though I have not gone through many pages of his lordship's book, yet I have answered the greatest part of it, the bulk of it being owing to frequent and almost endless repetitions of the same things; so that it may, I think, in this respect be very fitly compared to a multiplying glass, which though it seldom shows an object distinctly, yet it presents it to you over and over again.

AN ANSWER

TO THE LORD BISHOP OF BANGOR'S BOOK, INTITLED, "THE COMMON RIGHTS OF SUBJECTS DEFENDED," &c.—THE TRUE MEANING AND INTENTION OF THE CORPORATION AND TEST ACTS ASSERTED, &c.

SECTION I.

THERE is nothing more necessary in every controversy to give light to the reader, and to preserve him from being imposed on by the low and mean arts of sophistry, than a clear state of the fact or case about which the dispute is; for this reason I endeavored in my late Vindication of the Corporation and Test Acts, to give, in the first place, the true sense and meaning of those laws; and for the same reason it is, I suppose, that the Bishop of Bangor resents my taking this method, and observes with an air of contempt, that before I come to the main questions I spend above twenty pages in what I call stating the fact of the case. His lordship thinks this so unedifying a way of writing, that he professes to enter into this part of the work merely because I seem to think much depends on it. His lordship, I am persuaded, will be of my mind before he has done, and this much despised part of the work about the state of the case will haunt him in every part of the controversy, and will be a test (dreadful thing!) to distinguish in this debate between plain sense and a labored disguise, between reasoning and shuffling, between truth and falsehood.

After having given the sum of the corporation and test acts, as far as they relate to the present controversy, I observed:* "the latter of these acts is declared by the act of toleration

* Vindication, &c.—See Vol. iv. p. 433.

itself to extend to protestant dissenters. The former expressly relates to them; and both are declared, 10 Annæ, cap. 2. to be made for the security of the church of England as by law established.

"These acts then being made for the security of the church as by law established, that is, for the security of the ecclesiastical constitution of the realm; the intention plainly was to keep non-conformists of all sorts (whose principles and affection to their own ways cannot but lead them to use any power put into their hands to the hurt of the established church, from which they have separated) out of offices civil and military, and out of the government and direction of corporations; 'to the end that the succession in such corporations may be most probably perpetuated in the hands of persons well affected to his majesty and the established government,* and for preservation of the public peace both in church and state.'"†

In this part of the case his lordship finds several very visible mistakes, which he ranges under five heads. His first observation stands thus:

1. "When the corporation act was made, many of those ministers, who afterwards dissented, were in possession of their livings, and had been declared by King Charles II. himself but a few months before to have been found by him, when they waited on him in Holland, persons full of zeal for the peace of the church and state. Those particular non-conformists, who were followers of these men, could hardly be designed so soon to be excluded from any offices, merely in order to the preservation of the public peace, &c."

I find it very difficult to comprehend this reasoning: here are two things affirmed with respect to dissenting ministers, neither of which has any relation to the present case. 1. It is said that many of them were in possession of livings when the corporation act was made: 2. that a few months before that time King Charles had declared that he had found them to be persons full of zeal for the peace of the church and state. As to their being in possession of livings, it amounts to no proof of their zeal for the peace of church and state. A minister who

* Preamble to Corporation Act. † Ibid, p. 2.

has no living may be very zealous for the peace of both; and he who has many livings may possibly not regard the peace of either. Besides, the possession of livings which these ministers then had was an illegal possession, attended sometimes with injustice to the rightful incumbents, who had been ejected to make room for these men of zeal for peace; oftentimes with the injury of the true patrons, and almost always with the breach of the laws of church and state, insomuch that these ministers in possession at the time the corporation act passed, were liable to be dispossessed by the laws then in being, and were continued only by the indulgence and forbearance of the government in prospect of their compliance. 2. As to the king's declaration of their zeal for peace, it is a very feeble argument; for what if the king were deceived, and saw reason to alter his mind? or what if the ministers' behavior changed before the corporation act passed? In either of these cases, both which are very possible, the argument comes to nothing. But considering that the corporation act related not to ministers, the argument is still more absurd. For,

2. His lordship does not infer from the peaceableness of these ministers, that they were not intended to be affected by the act; but he infers from their peaceableness, that none of their followers were designed to be excluded from offices. But what if the followers were not so peaceable as the leaders, what then becomes of the argument? His lordship has produced no evidence that they were, and he has no right to the popish expedient of transferring merit from one to another.

3. It is very absurd to limit or explain general laws by the circumstances of individual men: such laws being made for public good are founded on general reasons; and if they attain the end, which, all things considered, is most for the benefit of the public, they are good and wholesome laws, notwithstanding that it may so happen that in some particular cases they bear hard.

Let us see then how his lordship's argument stands. The ministers who waited on the king in Holland were eight or ten at most, as our histories relate the fact: the ministers who refused to conform are reckoned by their own party to be two

thousand. In what manner many of them and their followers demeaned themselves, may be seen in the Chancellor's speech at the opening of the Parliament which met May 8, 1661, who tells us, "of seditious preachers, who cannot be content to be dispensed with for their full obedience to some laws established, without reproaching and inveighing against those laws how established soever—who by repeating the very expressions, and teaching the very doctrine they set on foot in the year 1640, sufficiently declare that they have no mind that twenty years should put an end to the miseries we have undergone." And at the opening the second sessions of this Parliament, the king tells them, "there are many wicked instruments still as active as ever, who labor day and night to disturb the public peace, and to make all people jealous of each other." In this session the corporation act and the act of uniformity both passed. His lordship's argument now is, that the corporation act could not be intended to exclude non-conformists of all sorts from places in corporations; because the king had declared a year before that he found eight or ten ministers full of zeal for the peace of church and state; and his lordship supposes their particular followers were all of the same mind. Allowing all this to be true, yet if his lordship can say nothing for the one thousand nine hundred and ninety other ministers and their followers, he leaves reason enough to support the justice and equity of the law, in intending to exclude non-conformists of all sorts.

4. The same argument will prove that the act of uniformity was not intended to exclude non-conformists of all sorts from livings and offices in the church; for why should these zealous ministers for the peace of the church and state be any more excluded from the church than their followers from the corporations.

5. It will prove also that no law in King Charles's reign was intended to exclude papists from offices; for the king publicly owned his obligation to many of them, who ventured their lives and estates in defence of his father and himself; and more than eight or ten might be named who were peaceable subjects.

6. Many non-conformists being in possession of their livings

at the time the corporation act passed, has led two other authors* into very great mistakes, which I shall take this opportunity of rectifying.

The author of 'the Principles,' &c. applies himself to me thus:† "I would desire leave to ask the learned dean this one question; how an act requiring persons in offices to receive the sacrament according to the rites of the church of England made in 1661, could be intended to exclude presbyterians, when so many of their ministers continued still in possession of the public churches till 1662? Would it not at that time have been a sufficient qualification to receive the sacrament in their parish church, though it should have been from no conformable minister?"

Mr. Lowman has the same argument, and introduces it with observing, "that the sessions of Parliament in which the corporation act was made was opened on the 8th of May, 1661; which was a year before the present ecclesiastical constitution was settled by the new act of uniformity." From whence he infers, "that the corporation act did not require any such adherence to the now constitution as the dean contends for; nor any such affection but what may be consistent with the principles of protestant dissenters, it being notorious that above two thousand then were employed in the service of the church."

The several mistakes on which this reasoning is founded, will appear by stating the fact on which they are built.

1. Mr. Lowman does not very candidly state this case. For though what he says of the opening of the sessions be true, yet the corporation act was not ready at the opening of the session, for it did not pass till the 20th of December, 1661, and the uniformity act passed the 19th of May following, in the same session: and though the present liturgy did not take place till August, 1662, yet the law enacting that it should take place then was in force before; and the corporation act and uniformity act mean one and the same thing by the church of England as by law established.

* Author of the Principles of an Occasional Conformist stated and defended, printed 1718. Mr. Lowman's Defence of Protestant Dissenters, &c. printed 1718.

† Preface, p. 6. 7.

2. Had the case been otherwise, yet Mr. Lowman's inference that the corporation act meant no affection inconsistent with the principles of protestant dissenters; and the other gentleman's inference, that receiving in a parish church from a nonconforming minister, was a sufficient qualification within the intent of the act; are ill grounded; for the corporation act requires that the sacrament be received according to the rites of the church of England.

Now whether the new act of uniformity was in being or no, yet the old one certainly was; and Mr. Lowman will not pretend that the protestant dissenters were readier to comply with the old act of uniformity than the new one; nor will the other gentleman affirm that the nonconformists who were in livings did observe the rites of the church of England as established by the old act of uniformity before the restoration: consequently it follows that receiving according to the rites of the church of England as established before the new act of uniformity, was as inconsistent then with the dissenters' principles as it is now, and receiving from the non-conformists, though in possession of livings, was no qualification according to the act. That the old laws relating to the establishment of the church were in force, and taken to be so at and before the restoration, every body knows; the House of Commons declare it in their address to the king, February, 1662-3. in which they tell him that his declaration from Breda ought not to be taken as a promise on his part to give indulgence, because he was not capable of making such a promise, there being laws of uniformity then in being, which could not be dispensed with but by act of Parliament. Mr. Baxter in his Life, p. 286. tells us too this was the case, and that the old laws were in force against the non-conformists before the new ones were made. But this matter is put out of all doubt by the last clause of the new act of uniformity, which provides that "the book of common prayer, and administration of sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the church of England, &c. heretofore in use, &c. shall be still used—until the feast of St. Bartholomew, 1662." And now let the gentleman answer himself, whether receiving in a parish church from a non-conformist was a sufficient qualification. But farther,

3. The one question which the gentleman desires to ask me goes on a very great mistake: his question is, "how an act requiring persons in offices to receive the sacrament according to the rites of the church of England made in 1661, could be intended to exclude presbyterians, when so many of their ministers continued still in possession of the public churches till 1662." If this gentleman had at all considered the corporation act, he would not have asked this question; for though the act was made in 1661, yet receiving the sacrament was not made a qualification for any office to which any person was called or elected before March 25, 1663, and the present act of uniformity took place in August, 1662; so that I must desire this gentleman to answer one question in his turn; whether receiving the sacrament from a non-conformist would have been allowed as a sufficient qualification within the meaning of the corporation act in any law court after March 25, 1663? and before that time there could be no question in law about it.

4. The stating of this case affords a very clear argument to justify the account I gave of this act, and of the true meaning of the sacramental test. By this act all officers in corporations are obliged to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, a new oath against the lawfulness of taking arms against the king, &c. and to subscribe a declaration about the solemn league and covenant, and to be qualified by having taken the sacrament within a year before their election, &c. It is to be observed that the three oaths were to be taken, and the declaration subscribed, by all who were in place on the 24th of December, 1661; but the sacramental test was required of such only as should be elected after the 25th of March, 1663. What was the reason, I pray you, of this difference? Was it not plainly this, that many churches being in the possession of non-conformists in 1661 and the year before, the parliament thought not fit to accept of any persons receiving the sacrament in the churches so possessed as an evidence of what they required, and knew that many persons well affected to the church of England had wanted opportunities of receiving according to the rites of the church for more than a year before the passing of the said act? For which reasons, though they immediately required the oaths and the subscription from all in offices in

December, 1661, yet they required the sacramental test of such only as should be elected after March 25, 1663; by which time, and long before which time they well knew that the non-conformist preachers would be removed, and the rites of the church of England be established throughout the kingdom by their new act of uniformity. Had they intended to require the receiving the sacrament, as a mere external act, without any regard to the inward sentiments and affection of the receiver, (which is the bishop of Bangor's peculiar dream,) or did they intend to accept of such a receiving of the sacrament as might be consistent with the principles of dissenters, (which is the supposition of the two authors lately mentioned,) why did they not require this sacramental test of all in office in 61 and 62? For this very reason they did not require it, because many non-conformists were in possession of parish churches; and they very well knew that receiving the sacrament among the non-conformists was no evidence or test of conformity, which was the qualification they required, and intended to secure by the sacramental test.

I may be asked perhaps another question, whether the parliament intended to permit non-conformists to enjoy offices in corporations, provided they came in before 63; since they required not of such that they should receive the sacrament according to the rites of the church of England. My answer is, that they had no such intention; and there is a particular and very large power given the commissioners in the corporation act, which seems to me principally designed to supply this defect in the mean time. All who refused the three oaths and subscription were to be turned out of corporation places; but the commissioners had a farther power, which was to turn out any of those who did take them, if they thought it expedient for the public safety. The reason of this plainly was, that the corporations might be settled on a true foot at first; that those who were afterwards to be the electors of members of the corporations, should themselves be persons of unsuspected zeal for church and state. Farther, it may be observed that as the sacramental test did not take place till 63, so the commissioners had a power till 63 to put out of places any, though in other respects qualified by the act; which extraordinary power ceased

at the same time that the sacramental test commenced, which shows, I think, for what end chiefly the extraordinary power was granted, namely, for the effectual exclusion of such as were intended to be excluded by the test; since it was thought necessary only until the sacramental test could take place. If his lordship or his friends can give better or other reasons for not requiring the sacramental test of any in office before 63, and of the extraordinary power granted to the commissioners till that time and no longer, I should be glad to hear them; in the meanwhile this argument appears to me decisive in this case, that the sacramental test was required as an evidence of constant conformity and obedience, and good affection to the ecclesiastical establishment; and that the extraordinary power given to the commissioners was to enable them to exclude such as were justly suspected of non-comformity, lest such should fix themselves in corporations before the sacramental test took place.

His lordship's second argument to show my several very visible mistakes, is—

2. "The test act was particularly and peculiarly levelled at papists, and not at non-conformists in general; nor at all at protestant dissenters, against whom now the dean so strenuously urges it. It was not, in the original design of it, a law for the particular security of the church of England as such, or of the ecclesiastical constitution of the realm, as he is pleased here to affirm it to be; but for the security of the state, and of the whole protestant cause, against papists alone, as he himself in effect afterwards owns."

This cavil might have been spared, had there been any inclination to fair dealing; because to avoid a dispute of no consequence in the present debate, except only to amuse the ignorant, I had referred for the extent of the test act in relation to dissenters, to the act of toleration, which expressly declares it to extend to protestant dissenters: let the particularity therefore and peculiarity of the test act in its original design be what it will, yet ever since the first of William and Mary it has by act of the legislature been bound on dissenters; it is a limitation and condition of their toleration; the same law which gives them one, declares and continues them liable to the other. This

being the fact, is it not of mighty consequence in the present case to repeat it thirty or forty times over, that the original design of the act was particularly and peculiarly against papists?

But what, does his lordship think that king, lords, and commons had lost all their senses in the twenty-fifth of King Charles; and that they passed an act which did and necessarily would (as things then stood) affect all dissenters, and yet without any design or intention to affect them at all? Is making of laws too become a mere external act, to which there goes no reason, design, or intention of the law-maker? This must be the case, or else it was part of the intention of the test act to exclude dissenters; since all the world knows it did, and foresaw that it would exclude them. Have we not been often told, and particularly by the late Bishop of Salisbury,* of the great merit of Alderman Love, a dissenter, who declared for himself and others that they would readily submit to the test, and not oppose it on their own account, for fear of stopping the security which the nation would have by that act? Does not Mr. Lowman tell us that it was an honor to the protestant dissenters that they so readily and generously gave up privileges they then enjoyed by law, for the sake of having the test act passed? And what now? Did the dissenters only see what effect the act would have? nay, did others not see it when the dissenters themselves declared the effect to them? or must we say that the legislature did certainly know that the dissenters would be affected by the act, and yet passed the act without any design or intention to affect them, (though without any exception in favor of them,) but particularly and peculiarly to affect papists, and them only? His lordship tells us that he deals not in legal suppositions, and yet methinks it would be but a small favor in him to suppose that our law-makers have common sense.

The truth is, that the test act was chiefly but not peculiarly designed against the papists. All the world saw what effect it would have on dissenters, and the act passed the more readily because this effect was seen, because it was understood that the test would guard the church and state from the attempts of

* Speech in the House of Lords on the Occasional Bill, 1704.

papists on one hand, and of dissenters on the other; and so little has this effect on dissenters been disowned or disliked by the legislature since, that at a time when they were most inclined to favor dissenters, and granted them a toleration, they took care explicitly and expressly to continue the test act on them.

His lordship adds, that this act was not made for the particular security of the church of England; that is, it was not made (as he explains himself) for the security of the church exclusive of the state; and who said it was? Let those who said it answer his lordship; but it follows that this act was made for the security of the whole protestant cause. Now the true design of the act was to secure the protestant interest as established in the king's dominions, which is indeed in consequence a security to the whole protestant cause; but will it follow from hence that it was not immediately intended for the security of the church of England? Will his lordship undertake to prove that this act, which excluded all dissenters from places of trust, was intended as much for the security of non-conformity as a part of protestantism, as it was for the security of the church established, whose members only were left capable of any share in the government? Could that parliament which esteemed the separation from the church of England to be a great weakening of the whole protestant cause, which had laid great penalties on all who taught in meeting-houses, and on all who were present at such teaching; could they, to secure the whole, intend to secure conventicles, which they thought destructive of the protestant interest as well as of the church? Whither will some men's abilities carry them, and how dangerous a snare is it to a man to imagine that he can prove or confute any thing at pleasure! But however, how does his lordship prove that the intent of this act was not for the particular security of the church of England? We have only his word that the act has no such meaning; on the other side I had produced the authority of the legislature, the crown, and the two houses of parliament, declaring this act to have been made for the security of the church of England as by law established; and notwithstanding the deference I have to his lordship's opinion even when he pleases to conceal his reasons, I cannot but still think

that the voice and authority of the legislature ought to outweigh his lordship's opinion in determining the intent and meaning of a statute of the realm.

His lordship proceeds to a third observation.

3. "The exclusion of non-conformists of all sorts was not therefore the certain intention of either of these acts; and undoubtedly not of the latter."

Such consequences from such premises are matter of curiosity, and not every day to be met with. But having already considered the premises, I shall not venture to follow the great example before me so far, as to repeat at every turn what has been said before. I shall only observe that his lordship is not satisfied with his own arguments as to the corporation act, and therefore he ventures only to say that it was not the certain intention of that act to exclude non-conformists of all sorts. If so, it seems that his lordship is not certain but that might be the intention, which shows that he can find no certain conclusion in any of his arguments against such an intention; and consequently he ought not to have placed my ascribing such an intention to that act among the very visible mistakes which he was to rectify, since after all he does not pretend that it is visible even to himself that it is a mistake. Of the test act his lordship has given some account to show what other intention it had originally; of the corporation act he has not pretended to give any account, he has not once in his whole book told us what this act was made for; and yet it was much to his purpose to say what the true end of the act was, when he so often declares that I had ascribed a wrong meaning to it: instead of this he tells us the certain intention of the act was not what I suppose it to be; but that it had any other probable or even possible meaning he knows not, or if he does, he has been very careful to keep that piece of useful knowlege to himself. I will not anger his lordship, nor return him any of the insult or reproach which I have received from him, yet I wish I could say enough to provoke him to open to us the true intention of this act. It will be a curious piece of history to know what this law was made for; whether it had no relation to non-conformists of any sort, or if only to some sort; by what words or article in the act the distinction is

made between the some that were to be excluded, and the some that were not. Let his lordship consider the several things required by this act, the three oaths, the subscription, the receiving the sacrament according to the rites of the church of England; and then let him tell us what sort of non-conformists they were, who neither refused receiving the sacrament in the church of England, nor renouncing the covenant, nor abjuring the legality of taking arms against the king, &c. nor taking the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, or either of them. When he has found such a set of non-conformists, it will be time enough to doubt about the certain intention of the act. As to his eight ministers full of zeal for the peace of church and state, and their particular followers, he will find them at least among those who thought it unlawful to renounce the covenant according to the form prescribed in the act; and therefore they are no exception to the general intention of the act. Mr. Baxter, in the history of his own life, tells us more than once this was the case of the most moderate nonconformists, the presbyterians; and it was plainly his own case, and that of his particular followers, as appears in his account of the people of Kidderminster.

As to the test act, his lordship tells us it was undoubtedly not the intention of it to exclude non-conformists of all sorts; and yet it is evident this was the effect, and that it would be undoubtedly the effect was foreseen on all sides: how is it then that the legislature had undoubtedly no intention to do what they undoubtedly saw they were doing, and did do? His lordship has very strongly declared himself against all legal suppositions, and I dare answer that his present supposition will never be charged with being either legal or natural. The truth is, as I conceive, that the test act was made principally and directly against papists; but the words of the act are general, "that all and every person or persons," &c.; and as the act is positive, requiring something to be done by all who bear office, so the plain meaning is, that every person who would not do what was required by the act, should be debarred from bearing office. This has ever been the case, and dissenters have for this reason been liable to many other acts made professedly indeed against papists, but being made against

papists as recusants and separatists, all other separatists as such necessarily came within the reach of those laws; and therefore it was necessary in the act of toleration to exempt protestant dissenters, particularly from an act made 3 Jac. I. intituled, 'An Act for better discovering and repressing popish recusants;' and from another of the same year, intituled, 'An Act to prevent and avoid dangers which may grow by popish recusants,' and from any other law or statute of this realm made against papists or popish recusants, except one statute made 25 Car. II. (which is the test act,) and another of the 30th made to disable papists from sitting in either house of parliament. From this account I think it must appear to every one to be very ridiculous to argue from the title of an act of parliament only, and to infer that an act made against papists ought not to be extended to dissenters; for it is plain, from the toleration act itself, that the case has always been otherwise, and the intention of the legislature is, that every person not complying with the conditions injoined by the law, whether papist or not papist, should be under the disabilities of it; to suppose any other intention is to destroy all sense in the law. For what is it the test requires? Is it not that every person bearing office should receive the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England? His lordship says this was undoubtedly not intended to exclude non-conformists of all sorts; and yet what exception has it made for non-conformists of any sort, who will not receive according to the usage of the church? And it is not denied to be evident that the great body of non-conformists of all sorts do refuse so to receive, and have done so ever since the restoration; it is a complaint frequently to be met with in Mr. Baxter, that the moderate non-conformists (as he calls them) who were for maintaining occasional communion with the church, lost ground daily with their own people, who were obstinately bent against such practice, and for that reason fell off to the more rigid sect, the independents; which by the by may show his lordship that he builds on a very slight foundation, when he argues from the moderation and peaceableness of the eight ministers who waited on the king abroad, that their particular followers were of the same moderate peaceable dispositions. But this matter of occasional con-

formity and its influence in the present argument will be cleared in its proper place.

His lordship's fourth reason is,

4. "There could be no such resolution in the legislature as the dean mentions; because receiving the communion according to the usage of the church of England, is so far from implying in it that he who so receives it is well affected to the ecclesiastical constitution of the realm, that it is perfectly consistent with the person's not so much as knowing one individual branch of that constitution, unless it be the office and manner of the celebration of the communion."

My argument stands thus: the corporation and test acts were made for the security of the church established by law; this I ground on the declaration made in the acts themselves, one being enacted for preservation of public peace both in church and state, the other to prevent dangers which may happen from popish recusants, (in which dangers surely the church established is not unconcerned,) and on the authority of the legislature declaring in the tenth of the queen, that both these acts were made for the security of the church of England as by law established; and that with a view to this security, the legislature chose to confine all places of trust to such only as would communicate with the church established in the most solemn act of Christian worship: from whence I infer the intention was to keep all out of places who wished the ruin of the established church, that is, non-conformists of all sorts.

In answer to this his lordship says, "that a man may receive the sacrament in the church of England without liking, because he may do it without knowing any thing more of the church of England than the single office in which he joins."

In reply, I say,

1. That allowing this new and subtle distinction to be good, yet it is nothing to the present purpose; for whatever is the case of one who knows nothing of the church, and therefore neither likes nor dislikes it, yet the case of papists and non-conformists is very different: they pretend to know and to condemn the church, and to avoid it as an unlawful communion. This reason therefore will not help them, and yet they are the only persons concerned in this dispute.

2. The lawgivers and everybody else consider the people of England either as well affected or ill affected to the church, and these laws were intended to discriminate them; it is very absurd therefore to introduce an unknown set of people, who know nothing of the church of England; and to consider how they would be affected by a law which has no relation to them.

3. The ground of his lordship's argument is false. It will not follow that a man had no intention to do this or that thing, because the means he made choice of were insufficient to effect it. The very nature of things often oblige men to make use of means which will not perfectly and in every respect attain the ends proposed; suppose therefore that receiving the communion in the church of England is not a certain means to prove a man's good affection to the church, yet it is no argument against the resolution ascribed to the law-makers: it will only prove that they did not perfectly attain their end, if they had such an end in view; that they had it not in view, it will never prove.

4. The speculations and new inventions of divines are no rule to interpret laws by. Law-makers consider the principles and practices of the people in general, who have not yet learned to communicate with a church without liking it, or to distinguish away all the duties of Christian communion.

The fifth and last observation on this head is of a piece with the former; only in this fifth his lordship as much outdoes himself as in the fourth he outdid every body else. His words are:

5. "A true and real concern for the peace of church and state does not always imply in it so much as a conformity in any one act of communion with the church which happens to be established in any country; or, in the dean's phrase, to be the ecclesiastical constitution of any realm. The good and honest reformers were, I presume, as truly concerned for the public peace both of church and state in Queen Mary's days, as any of those papists who constantly conformed to her church; and yet they totally and openly separated from it. They were non-conformists, and yet had a true and sincere concern for the peace of church and state; which I only mention to show that non-conformity to a church established by human laws cannot

be in itself a certain sign to Christians of any want of a due concern for the peace of church and state; and therefore that the before-mentioned words, relating to the preservation of the public peace, cannot prove this intended exclusion of non-conformists of all sorts and of all tempers."

The words of the corporation act to which this noble observation relates are,—"and for the preservation of the public peace both in church and state." From whence I argued (unfortunately it seems) that the intention of the legislature in this act was to secure the church as by law established. No, says his lordship; that could not be the intention, because "a true and real concern for the peace of church and state does not always imply in it so much as a conformity in any one act of communion with the church, which happens to be established in any country." Strange concern for the peace of a church which is consistent with a total separation from it, and with the most earnest endeavors to destroy it! But does not the act require such a concern for the peace of the church as should be manifested by communicating with the church in the Lord's supper? What have we then to do with a concern for the peace of the church which is consistent with a total separation? If there be in nature such a thing, yet the act has excluded it by requiring communion with the church as an evidence of concern for the peace of it. Will his lordship venture to affirm that the words in the act were meant of any church or state but those established at that time in England? or will he venture to own his position when stripped of the disguise thrown over it by a happy variety of sounds, and say plainly that a real concern for the peace of the established church is consistent with a total separation from the established church, and with an intire aversion to it? Were the first reformers concerned for the peace of the popish church established in Queen Mary's days? did they receive the sacrament in that church? did they subscribe to its articles and liturgy, and press forward to gain its preferments? No; they openly opposed it, openly avowed it to be corrupt and idolatrous, openly pleaded for its removal. By what art, by what logic then does it follow from this example that an act professedly made for the preservation of the established church, and expressly requiring communion with

that church in a very solemn instance of Christian worship, had no intention but what was consistent with any man's refusing conformity with that established church in any one act of communion?

There is no sect whatever but what pretends to be zealous for the church of Christ, and thinks theirs to be that church; it is this and this only that makes it necessary to secure the established church, because dissenters pretending zeal for the church, and holding their own sect to be the church, are enemies to the established church. For this very reason papists and sectaries are excluded from offices of trust in England; and for this very reason his lordship thinks they are not excluded, because, though they hate the established church, yet they are concerned for the church according to the notions they have of it. This argument would fit the mouth of Ludlow with respect to the state; he might say that no act made to preserve the peace of the state could in the intention of it reach him; for though he hated the established constitution of the state with a king at the head of it, yet he was as much for the peace of the state as any man. This is fine reasoning; and after such an instance as this his lordship had much reason to talk of the skill of others in the legerdemain of sounds; I have perhaps less reason to complain of this than his lordship's friends, for he betrays the utmost contempt of his admirers, when he thinks such arguments will go down with them.

SECTION II.

The second thing to be considered is, whether receiving the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England be a proper test to distinguish between those who are and those who are not well affected to the established church. A proper test in this case is that, which, all things considered, yields the most probable evidence. Human affairs do not admit of a mathematical certainty; and if law-makers must do nothing till they can find infallible never-failing methods of attaining their ends, the world must be without law and government. An oath is not an infallible evidence of a man's veracity, for we all know that it too often fails, and the sad effects of it are seen and felt

every day. It is very unreasonable therefore to argue against a test as improper to the end proposed, because in some instances it does or may fail; Christians do not use to communicate with a church, whose communion they do not approve. To approve of the church's communion, and to be well affected to the church, is one and the same thing; therefore a man's communicating with a church is the most probable evidence he can give of his being well affected to it. In answer to this his lordship says,

1. That many non-conformists do sometimes receive in the church of England, and yet are not well affected to the church. p. 10.

2. He repeats this again, and instances in Mr. Baxter and Dr. Bates, p. 12.

3. We have the same argument a third time, p. 12.

4. And a fourth time, p. 13; and an instance is given in the behavior of papists at the beginning of the reformation.

The same reasoning occurs over and over again in his lordship's answer, which though it be a great weight on the reader, yet it adds none to the argument; for one multiplied by one to the world's end, will still be but one; and I hope I shall be forgiven if I answer it but once.

1. This argument is of no consequence at all with respect to the corporation act, because the proof there does not rest merely on receiving in the church, but on many other particulars, all which no non-conformist (as ever I heard) would comply with. It might be the intention therefore of that act to exclude all non-conformists, even allowing what his lordship has said on this head to be true.

2. With respect to the test act there is a manifest fallacy in this reasoning; for his lordship's argument turns wholly on such a state of dissenters as we have seen since the toleration, which was not the state of dissenters when the test act passed. And surely it is reasonable, in order to know the true meaning of the sacramental test, to consider it in conjunction with the laws in being when it was made, and not in conjunction with the laws as they have been since altered. When the test act was made, there were very severe laws in being against conventicles, and so far were the legislature from not intending to debar all who had offices from going to meetings, (as his lord-

ship concludes from their acquaintance with the principles of occasional conformists,) that it was their intention declared in many acts, and inforced by many penalties, to restrain every subject from non-conformity.

So that to prove what his lordship aims at, that the legislature had no intention to exclude all nonconformists from offices by the test act, he must not only show that the sacramental test is not inconsistent with a man's going to meetings, but he must show that it was a licence to go, that it amounted to a repeal of the laws against conventicles, and gave those in places such a liberty of going to conventicles as no other subjects had. For most certain it is, that occasional conformity was not permitted by law when the test act passed, and therefore its pretensions cannot be brought into consideration in determining the intention of the legislature in the test act; for certainly occasional conformity consists of two parts, in going sometimes to church and sometimes to meetings; and can he be said to approve or to allow of occasional conformity, who allows a man to go only to church? And yet thus the law stood when the test act passed: all men were required to come to church, but none were allowed to go to meetings. Since then it was the intention of the legislature not to permit any subject to be a non-conformist, how is it that his lordship finds that it was agreeable to their intention to permit such as could get places to be non-conformists? How is it to be accounted for that there should be any such intention in the legislature at a time when the laws required all conventicles to be suppressed; and was so far from allowing or even supposing persons in places of power to be dissenters, that such persons themselves are appointed to suppress meetings? Could the legislature think that dissenters were proper persons to suppress conventicles? or had there been an intention to permit lieutenants, deputy-lieutenants, justices of the peace, officers of the militia, chief magistrates in every corporation, and the aldermen of London, to be and continue dissenters, would the law have intrusted these persons with the suppressing of conventicles? What an excellent account does such a supposition give of the wisdom of our legislature?

The test act, in conjunction with the laws against non-conformity then in being, was a much stronger exclusion of non-

conformists of all sorts from places of trust than the test act and occasional act were when they subsisted together; and as the whole spirit of the act of toleration is to exempt dissenters from penalties, not to exalt them to power, so there was no design to make their way easier to power in the government; and when it appeared that exempting dissenters from penal laws gave them an advantage which was not intended them, to elude the force of the test act, which the parliament intended to continue them under, it was neither unjust nor inequitable to redeem the law from the unforeseen abuse of it, and to reduce non-conformists by the occasional bill to the original conditions of the toleration; which meant to preserve the test act in its true sense.

And since his lordship lays so much stress on the original design and intention of the legislature in the test act, let him consider that they had made every kind of non-conformity penal to every subject. Not content with this only, they require actual conformity in all who should have places; and as a test of it, require the evidence of their receiving the sacrament according to the usage of the church of England: let him consider this, and then tell us what possibility there is to suppose that they intended to leave room for any non-conformist to enjoy places of trust; and instead of a history of the principles of occasional conformists, and a story of Mr. Baxter and Dr. Bates, whose opinions I dare be confident were no guide to the law-makers, let his lordship give us a history of some occasional conformists who were permitted to hold places, and at the same time to go to conventicles, before the toleration. There could be no such practice consistently either with the letter or the intention of the laws before the toleration; and therefore occasional conformity for places was never known or heard of till after the revolution. Had there been indeed a toleration subsisting when the test act passed, and had it been evidently the practice of any considerable number of men to communicate both in the church and in the meetings, there had been some color for his lordship to say that the legislature, when they required the sacramental test, did not mean to exclude all non-conformists; but since, as the law then stood, no meetings were allowed, the sacramental test was plainly required as a stronger proof of

affection to the church than the mere coming to church to the common service; which the laws before required, under penalties, of all subjects.

Let any man therefore carry himself so far back in his own thoughts as to the time when the test act passed, and when he has viewed the posture of affairs then, and considered the laws in being, he will find that the test act wanted not the additional security of an occasional bill to make it an effectual exclusion of non-conformists of all sorts, but that the laws then in being were more than equivalent in this respect to an occasional bill. This will show him plainly what the true intent of the legislature was in the test act; which is to be learned by considering the test as an additional security to the laws then in being, and not by considering what it will do by itself singly and alone, and in quite another state of things than that under which it passed, those laws being now no longer in force.

And since his lordship is pleased to own that "a short plain law, that once going to any separate congregation should imply an incapacity," would answer all the intention I ascribe to these acts, let him read the first act among those taken off from dissenters by the toleration, and he will find that it made the going to conventicles an incapacity for more than offices of civil power and trust; and though neither his lordship nor I can approve the severity of that law, yet it concerns his lordship to show that even during the continuance of that act there was no intention to debar men in offices from going to meetings.

Thus much I have said to justify the account I gave of the intention of the legislature in the acts before us.

But to try the force of his lordship's reasoning, let us apply it to a like case, and see what service it will do.

His lordship says the legislature knew that many non-conformists could and would communicate in the church so as to qualify themselves, and therefore they had no meaning to exclude all non-conformists from places by the test.

His lordship, I suppose, makes no doubt but the legislature has long known that many enemies to the present government will and do take the oaths of allegiance and abjuration; from

whence by the bishop's logic it is to be inferred that they had no intention to exclude the enemies of the government by the oaths of allegiance and abjuration.

Let his lordship now answer his own argument thus applied, or let him own that it is absurd to look for exact and mathematical certainty in human laws.

2. Another argument or article, or whatever you please to call it, for what it is I know not, appears four or five times in this section, and then walks throughout his lordship's answer, as if it had business in every page. I had observed that receiving the sacrament, &c. was enjoined as the most probable evidence of a man's being sincerely well affected to the established church; his lordship answers that receiving the sacrament in the church is no proof that a man likes every thing belonging to our church government, or the whole ecclesiastical constitution; and his lordship represents my meaning to be that receiving the sacrament in the church is a proof, "that a man is heartily resolved to preserve every branch of the ecclesiastical constitution in its present condition against all amendments or alterations whatsoever."

This is no argument against what I have said; but if there be any thing in it, it proves that there is no such thing as a man's being well affected to any person or thing in the world without being guilty of great folly; for there is not the person or thing in the world so perfect, but that in some respect or other it is capable of being amended; and it seems there is no being well affected to any thing without being heartily resolved to admit of no amendments in it. For instance, should a father send for a physician, and say to him, "Sir, I beg your assistance, my son has a fever, and I am extremely fond of him;" the physician, on his lordship's principles, might answer; "why then do you send to me if you are fond of your son in a fever? it is plain you would not have his distemper removed by any amendment or alteration of his condition." So again, if a man should profess to like his old seat in the country, it would follow in the same method of science that he is determined never to repair it, for that would be either to alter or to amend it: or apply his lordship's demonstration to the state, and then it follows that no friend of the civil establishment can consistently with

his good affection to the state ever consent to the repeal of any inconvenient law or statute whatever. In a word, we have this conclusion from the position, that it is impossible for the friends of church or state ever to do any good to either by altering or amending what is amiss; which, if his lordship intended as a reason for putting places of power and trust into the hands of such as are enemies to both, there may perhaps be something more in this reasoning than I at first apprehended.

What is meant by being well affected to the ecclesiastical constitution in this debate, is very evident from the nature of the case itself. Here is a division in the people, and some think it their duty to adhere to the established church, and to preserve it in opposition to the sectaries who would destroy it; others think that they ought not to adhere to the church, and therefore they set up conventicles in opposition to it. The whole use of the sacramental test is to distinguish between these men; and therefore whoever joins himself to the church of England as a member of the communion, is in the number of the well affected to the ecclesiastical constitution, according to the discrimination intended to be made by these statutes between the well and ill affected: whether such a man likes every thing in the constitution of the church can be no question on the foot of these laws; for they, considering the people only with respect to the present separation, do receive all who renounce the separation and live in communion with the church, as well affected to the establishment; and in this view undoubtedly he, who, all things considered, judges it to be his duty to join with the church established, though he may see things in it which he wishes altered or amended, is with respect to the separatist one of the well affected. This is the great and true difference regarded by the law, which meant nothing less than to enter into the particularity of each single man's opinion in single points of church government.

His lordship's observation in this section with respect to the papists who communicated with our church in the beginning of the Reformation, besides what it has in common with the same observation with respect to dissenters, has this singular beauty, that it first informs us that the Romish church forbids its mem-

bers coming to our communion, for the " sake of the bad consequences to their own cause," the papists growing into a good liking of the church, whose communion they frequented; and it ends with informing us that this instance is a plain proof that communicating as they did with a church is " consistent with an outrageous zeal and fury against it." His lordship's concern in the present cause could not but draw from him some kind expressions towards occasional conformity wherever he found it, and his zeal against papists made him forget himself within seven or eight lines after.

SECTION III.

The third section contains nothing not yet considered, excepting that in the title the word *demonstration* is to be met with in different characters; a sure sign always that there is but very little to follow it.

In order to this demonstration, we are told (p. 14.) there were two methods of compassing the end which I ascribe to these acts; and in the next page we are told that these two must be joined together to make one effectual method. If it is not plain to every reader how two methods make one, or how one method is two, it must be ascribed to the difficulties which attend demonstration.

But as to the two methods which make one; the first of them proposes to us in what manner the legislature might effectually have made " constant uninterrupted conformity " (mind the words) the condition of enjoying places; and this it seems might have been done by a short law, enacting that once going to any separate congregation should imply in it an incapacity or forfeiture. So that not going to a meeting is the same thing as constant uninterrupted conformity; that is, not going to a meeting and constantly going to church are one and the same thing. But farther, his lordship tells us that the occasional bill (which made once going to a meeting an incapacity and forfeiture) allowed such a behavior as supposes the person not intirely satisfied with a total uninterrupted conformity. So that his lordship's demonstrable method of confining offices to the condition

of constant uninterrupted conformity allows every man in office such a behavior as supposes him not intirely satisfied with total uninterrupted conformity; and is "perfectly consistent with a person's not adhering to the church constantly and affectionately."

In setting forth the second method, his lordship says, "supposing the legislature to have intended to have excluded from offices all but such as were well affected to our ecclesiastical constitution, nothing could have been more natural or more obvious than to have required," &c. Here then in the way of demonstration we have a natural and obvious method of making an inward affection or disposition a qualification for offices; and yet within three or four pages the demonstration takes a new turn, and his lordship pronounces it "an undeniable proposition that the real inward disposition cannot possibly, by any human law, be made a qualification for any office:" (p. 19.) So again, at p. 29. his lordship is sure that "an act of parliament cannot reach to the inward disposition." What now is become of the natural and obvious method which the parliament had of confining offices to the well affected to the church? The undeniable proposition has run away with the demonstration; but its triumph will be but short; for at p. 42. another test of an inward disposition arises; for an oath, we are told, is a test of veracity, which veracity is an inward disposition; or if it be something external, I wish we had its picture by a good hand that we might know it when we meet it.

His lordship's second method, or rather the second half of his method, is inconsistent with one great end of the test act allowed on both sides. His lordship proposes to change the sacramental test into an oath, declaring the person's good affection to the church, &c. Now we both allow that it was the undoubted design of the act to exclude papists; and his lordship informs us that papists cannot be dispensed with to receive the sacrament with us, but may be dispensed with to take oaths: and yet changing the sacramental test into an oath is a demonstrable method of answering all the ends which I ascribe to the test act, the principal of which is the exclusion of papists.

Surely there was some fate attending it, when of all the sec-

tions in the book this only was introduced with the triumph of demonstration; but I have done with it, and hasten to the fourth section to take care of some observations of my own.

SECTION IV.

1. His lordship complains that I impute to him that he supposes barely receiving the sacrament to be the test required by those acts. To which I have this to say, that it appeared to me from his language and his reasoning in this case that such was his supposition; nor has he now produced any words of his own not consistent with such a supposition. However, as this matter does not affect the cause, but is personal between his lordship and me, it is not worth prosecuting; and if I have mistaken his meaning, I beg his and the reader's pardon.

2. I had affirmed that the test lies chiefly on these words in the act, "according to the usage and rites of the church of England." His lordship takes notice here that I had a small interval of good sense, which held long enough for me to utter one word which spoiled the whole observation. The observation was, that barely receiving the sacrament was not the test; and I must wait for another interval of good sense before I can apprehend how this observation is spoiled by saying that the test lies chiefly on the rites and usage of the church of England in receiving.

I add that "every man, as a Christian, is supposed to receive the sacrament somewhere," and infer that "barely receiving the sacrament is no test of any affection to the ecclesiastical constitution of this kingdom." His lordship says, "this is making the legislature suppose what is absolutely and notoriously false; for it is manifest that there are many professed Christians who receive not at all." I answer,

1. It is a known maxim in law, that every man is supposed to do his duty till the contrary appears.

2. I say that every man, as a Christian, is supposed, &c.; and I still think that a man cannot be considered as a Christian without supposing him to receive somewhere. And this his lordship saw, when instead of my words he chose others, and replied that many professed Christians do never receive.

3. His lordship's reasoning here is founded on the common mistake that runs through his answer, " that the legislature were to consider the principles and practices of every single man;" whereas their view necessarily led them to consider only the principles and practices of the several divisions of Christians among us, and from thence to infer what would be the most probable test to distinguish a churchman from dissenters of all sorts. In this view the test is proper; for it is the principle of all sects that their way of administering the sacrament is the true way; and if there be a sect who are in principle against receiving at all, they can no more receive according to the rites of our church than according to any other rites.

4. This justifies the second supposition found fault with by the bishop, namely, " that no man would receive in such a manner but a member of the church of England." The ground of this supposition, namely, " that a man ought not to separate from a true church of Christ settled in the country he belongs to, or join in communion with those who do;" is as old as Christianity; and I am willing to allow that our legislature were intirely unacquainted with his lordship's new principles of church communion with opposite churches, and consequently that they had it not before them to provide against them. But I must remind him too that there was no sect then, nor is there now, (whatever may be the case of some particular men of all sorts,) who owned such principles; and I have already told his lordship that general laws respect general circumstances, and are not founded on the particularities of individuals; and if it be just reasoning in his lordship to say " that these laws were not intended to exclude sectaries, because some sectaries will comply with the laws;" it will be just as strong with respect to the abjuration oath; and it must be allowed that the law enjoining the oath was not intended to exclude the Pretender, because some men (as we are often told) have found ways of reconciling the oath with strong inclinations to bring him in.

2. Another observation which I made, and am now to answer for, is, " that receiving the sacrament is not the qualification for an office within the intent of the act, but only the proof of it. That the qualification to be proved is good affection to the ecclesiastical establishment."

1. His lordship's first remark here is, that receiving, &c. has no relation to an esteem of the whole ecclesiastical constitution: this has been already considered.

2. In his second he tells us, "that it may, he thinks, be called an undeniable proposition that the real inward disposition cannot possibly by any human law be made a qualification for any office."

The reason given for this is, that it is not possible to judge of real inward affection, which I cannot allow to be true. There are many ways to judge of it: all that is true, is only this, that we cannot judge of it infallibly; and true it is also, that human laws do not reach to infallibility either in this or any other case: moral probability and assurance is all they pretend to; and as Aristotle observes in ethics, so is it in government, that is true which is so ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ.

3. His lordship's next argument is, that affection to the established church is not the qualification required in these acts; because he who performs only the outward act of receiving, &c. is duly qualified according to the acts, whether he be friend, or a professed enemy to the church established. I beg leave to repeat what his lordship ought to have taken notice of, "that the word test is a relative term, and always respects something that is to be testified." The outward act of receiving required by these laws is required as a test; the question then is, what is the thing to be testified? His lordship must either affirm that these laws require no test, and that all the world has been under a mistake from the making of the acts to this time; or he must say that they require a test, but without intending that any thing should be testified by it. His lordship's present argument only shows that human laws may be easily evaded, which will never amount to a proof that they have no meaning. Try the argument in other cases, and see how it will do. Whoever, be he friend or enemy to the church, performs the outward act of subscribing the articles, of declaring his assent or consent, &c. is qualified by law for a living; the laws therefore requiring such subscriptions and declarations, have no intention to keep such as dislike our articles or service, and are enemies to the church, out of livings; but their only true intent is, that men should perform these outward actions merely as outward

actions, and by so doing be fully qualified for offices in the church, and this equally whether they be friends or enemies to the church.

But is it not, you will say, true in fact that they who perform the outward acts required by the laws, are in the eye of the law qualified for an office? I answer, it is true.

Was it not likewise the intention of the legislature that such should be reckoned duly qualified? I answer, it was their intention. But still this will not do his lordship's business; for it remains to be answered as plainly on his side—for what reason did the legislature make choice of these outward acts rather than any other, and lay all who were to be in offices under an obligation of performing them? Was it mere humor that led the parliament to this choice, without respect to any purpose that was or could be served by it? Whenever his lordship thinks fit to answer these questions, he will answer his own book; in the meanwhile I desire it only of the reader to try if he can answer them consistently with his lordship's principles, and the arguments made use of by him in this case.

4. His lordship's next argument is the same with that which went before, excepting only that he is so bountiful as to argue with me on the supposition of the truth of what I assert, namely, "that receiving in the church is required by the legislature as a probable mark of affection to the church." And yet this being allowed, we are still told that the material outward action is the qualification in the intention of the lawmakers: that is, allowing the sacramental test to be required only as a sign by the legislature, yet it is the qualification for an office, not as a sign, but merely as an outward material action: or in plainer words, it was the intention to require it as a sign, yet it was not the intention to require it as a sign, but as an external act, without regard to its significancy. I am very sorry this argument did not stand with its fellows under the title of demonstration.

But to show the sophistry of this reasoning, we need only consider the difference between the primary intention of a law and those intentions which attend it merely in order to attain the main end. In the present case it is the primary intention of the law, that only such should have offices as are well affected

to the church. To compass this intention, it is necessary to settle what shall be taken as a proof of such affection, and to limit places to such only as give such proof. This being settled, it may be said (which is what his lordship says) that it is the intention of the law that all who give the proof required should be capable; but then this intention is evidently subservient to the main intention that only the well affected to the church should be capable; and it is very absurd to suppose any inconsistency between this intention of the law, and that which is the main and primary intention or ultimate end of it. What his lordship farther adds under this head, that an enemy to the church is qualified by law when he has done what the law requires, amounts only to this, that men may defeat the end of a law, even whilst they comply with the letter of it. His lordship declares, I know, "that the letter of the law is the law, and they who perform all that the (letter of the) law of men requires, obey the law of men." The contrary has always been held as an undoubted maxim, with respect to all laws human and divine; and it has been the agreed sense of divines and lawyers, and of all men of understanding, that the true sense and meaning of the law is the law, even in opposition to the letter of the law. What will his lordship say to hundreds of texts even in Scripture? Must we, according to the letter, rejoice evermore, and pray without ceasing, and yet mourn with those who mourn, and every man do his own business, working with his hands? So in human laws: does he who subscribes the declaration against transubstantiation according to the letter of the law, and yet believes it; or he who renounces the pope in the words of the law, and yet firmly adheres to him and his claims; do these men obey the law whilst they defeat the intention of it? Let the world be told this plainly, and we shall soon have an end of this controversy; a controversy that cannot subsist without the support of such principles as confound and destroy all the laws of God and man.

To proceed—

His lordship's original charge against these laws was, that they were an abuse of the sacrament, that they "turned it aside from its original and natural design, to a purpose against its own nature," &c. Having shown, from a true state of the

case, that the laws were not chargeable with so much impiety, I added an observation from the corporation act, which was, that a man might give the evidence required by that law without knowing that his receiving would ever be such an evidence; and consequently without receiving in any other manner, with any other view, intention, or thought, than what devout Christians have at all times; which shows that the use made of the sacrament by this law does not turn aside the sacrament from its original use, or introduce any use contrary to its nature. His lordship has mistaken this argument, and reasoned against something else for about two pages, which as they concern not me, so neither will I be concerned with them.

His lordship's next attack is on the use I make of two statutes of James I. The first of them (3 Jac. I. cap. 4.) expressly charges the papists with complying with the letter of the laws before in being, to hide their false hearts; which his lordship, who thinks the letter of the law the law, should have observed; and for the better discovery of such persons, a sacramental test is provided. And yet in opposition to the declared sense of the act, his lordship goes on with the old story of outward acts, of *total* conformity; and then, to show that inward affection had nothing to do in the case, he adds a proof, which I wonder he did not call a demonstration: his lordship tells us that the legislature required the receiving the sacrament as an outward act only, which popish recusants did not and were not allowed to perform, &c. I desire to know whether papists are under any natural impossibility of receiving the sacrament in the church; for if they have a natural power to do it, supposing they had the will, it is plain their not doing it can only discover their will or inward affection. And yet this test, which is a test solely on the wills and affections of papists, we are told is a proper test; which is a very proper conclusion of a long discourse against the possibility of having a test on inward affections.

As to the second of the two acts (7 Jac. I. cap. 2.), his lordship will allow all I contend for, that the sacramental test was proper to show who were protestants, (though I trust to be a protestant consists in more than externals only,) provided we will be content that, by the religion established in England in

James the First's time, he may understand not the religion of the church established, but the protestant religion in general, whether according to the conventicle or the church. I am not disposed to allow him this, and so we must not agree; and I must be content that his lordship should ring over his changes again on occasional conformity, outward acts, legal intent of the letter of the law, &c.

But for a finishing stroke, we are told that there is no arguing from one law to another, from the known sense of the expressions or provisions of one, to the probable sense of the same expressions and provisions in another; that the true and undoubted meaning of the sacramental test in two acts of James I. is no ground for fixing the meaning of the same test, used for the same purpose, and expressly applied to the same sort of persons by an act of Charles II.

His lordship here should have considered what I had observed to him, that a test is used because of its natural signification: the law cannot impose a signification on, or make it denote any thing but what it naturally denotes; and therefore the proper and natural signification of a test is always the same, though used in twenty acts; and the certain meaning of it in any one must be the meaning of it in all the rest. But I will not argue this point. If his lordship can make this rule prevail against interpreting one statute by another, much may be done towards reforming the pleadings and arguings in Westminster Hall; and I willingly resign all my interest in this solid observation to the gentlemen who are likely to have more use for it than ever I shall.

I have now gone through the several arguments which his lordship thought fit to make use of, with respect to the meaning and intention of the laws before us; from which I hope it will appear to every reader how little reason there was for his lordship's repeated insinuation, that the intention ascribed to these laws is owing to my invention, that it is my supposition, contrived to answer my own wishes and design. For my own part, I think it a greater crime to counterfeit the law of the land than the coin of it. I cannot but think it very injurious to charge me with such a design, but I have learned not to be

surprised at any thing of this sort that comes from his lordship's hand. What ground he had for such a charge will farther appear from hence.

In the first year of the Queen, anno 1702, a bill for preventing occasional conformity passed the House of Commons; when it came to the Lords it underwent many alterations and amendments, which were the subject of several conferences between the two Houses. It will not be supposed that the Lords and the Commons agreed to put a new sense on the corporation and test acts manifestly injurious to the dissenters, who wanted not at that time very discerning advocates to secure them from all oppressions; but yet this very meaning of the two acts, which his lordship is pleased to ascribe to my invention and design, was admitted on both sides as the foundation of the new law then under consideration: The preamble of the bill as sent up from the Commons, had this clause.

"Nevertheless, whereas the laws do provide that every person to be admitted into any office or employment, should be conformable to the church as it is by law established, by enacting that every such person so to be employed should receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites and usage of the church of England: yet several persons dissenting from the church as it is by law established, do join with the members thereof in receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to qualify themselves to have and enjoy such offices and employments, and do afterwards resort to conventicles or meetings for the exercise of religion in other manner than according to the liturgy and practice of the church of England, which is contrary to the intent and meaning of the laws already made: be it therefore enacted," &c.

As the bill was amended by the Lords the clause stood thus:

"But nevertheless whereas several persons dissenting from the church, as it is by law established, do join with the members thereof in receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to qualify themselves to have and enjoy offices and employments, and do afterwards resort to conventicles and meetings for the exercise of religion in other manner than according to the

liturgy and practice of the church of England, which is contrary to the intent and meaning of the laws already made: be it therefore enacted," &c.

It is evident that both Lords and Commons do agree that for any person to receive the sacrament for an office, and afterwards to resort to conventicles, was contrary to the intent and meaning of the laws requiring the sacramental test. This is so plain, that I wonder by what light Dr. Calamy* discovered that the Lords disowned that it was the intention of the law, that all persons should be conformable to the church, who were obliged to receive the sacrament, &c. The Lords say in their own bill, that it was contrary to the intent of the laws for such persons to go to meetings; and I suppose the doctor will not impute it to the Lords that it was their opinion that the law intended to dispense with all public worship. The Lords knew best their own reason for altering the Commons' preamble, and they tell us it was because the part left out by them asserted a fact which they apprehended to be otherwise; namely, that every person to be admitted into any office was bound to take the sacrament; whereas the Lords apprehended that there were some offices which might be had and enjoyed without receiving the sacrament; but that the laws which require the sacramental test did not intend thereby a conformity to the church established, they never say, nor could they say it consistently with the preamble of their own bill. The then Bishop of Salisbury did indeed at the free conference, in answer to a charge of hypocrisy brought against occasional conformity, observe that, "it is not a certain inference that because a man receives the sacrament in the church, he can therefore conform in every other particular;" but he does not pretend to say, in opposition to the bill he was to maintain, that the law had no intention to secure a conformity to the church by the sacramental test. The conferences between the two Houses on the occasional bill were published by each House separately; and every one may satisfy himself from them whether I am truly chargeable with inventing a new intention for the corporation and test acts, agreeably to my own

* Abridgment of Mr. Baxter, &c. p. 626.

wishes and design; a charge, which perhaps it may be expected I should submit to with silence, but which, had it come from me to his lordship, would, I doubt not, have been advertised as a calumny long before this time.

On the whole, let any one consider the state of dissenters before the toleration and since, and that alone will enable him to determine this part of the controversy. Before the revolution non-conformists of all sorts were subject both to penal laws and disqualifying laws. The former laws extended to the suppressing of all conventicles, and to the punishment of every subject who should be found to have resorted to a conventicle for the exercise of religion; the latter were made to exclude all but members of the church established from places, and for that reason required of every man, in order to his having and enjoying a place, &c. that he should receive the sacrament according to the rites of the church of England. This test was enacted whilst the penal laws subsisted, and was effectual to that purpose in conjunction with them; there was no reason to add a particular provision to the law, that such as qualified for places should not afterwards resort to conventicles, at a time when there were very severe laws restraining every subject from that practice.

At the revolution a toleration was granted to dissenters, which was intended to ease them from the penal laws, but not from the disqualifying laws; for the act of toleration expressly excepts the disqualifying laws, and declares and continues all dissenters under them.

But the removal of the penal laws did in the consequence enervate and weaken the disqualifying laws, and opened the way for such dissenters as would come once to church to qualify themselves, to go to conventicles for ever after; for which evasion of the law there could be no room as long as it was penal to every man to resort to conventicles.

From the case as it now stands since the toleration, the bishop argues that it never was the intention of the corporation and test acts to exclude dissenters from offices of trust; and his main argument is, that by the principles of occasional conformity a man may give the test required, and yet continue a

dissenter; and therefore the law which provided this test only, could not intend to exclude dissenters. In answer to which I say, that from the beginning it was not so; and I have shown from the laws in being when the test act was made, that it could not be so. I say farther, that the toleration was intended only to exempt dissenters from penalties, and not to make their way easy to power; and that the advantage which they have made in this respect on the removal of the penal laws, is contrary to the intent of the laws still in being, and to the very conditions of the toleration; and that the occasional bill was not an encroachment on any right given or intended to be given to dissenters, but a means only to prevent their encroachment on the true intent and meaning of the laws still remaining in force.

That this was the case appears sufficiently from the act of toleration itself; but the steps previous to this act make it still plainer.

On the 16th of March 1688, King William made a speech to both Houses, in which he says, "I am, with all expedition I can, filling up the vacancies that are in offices and places of trust by this late revolution; I know you are sensible there is a necessity of some law to settle the oaths to be taken by all persons to be admitted to such places. I recommend it to your care to make a speedy provision for it, and as I doubt not but you will sufficiently provide against papists, so I hope you will leave room for the admission of all protestants that are willing and able to serve.

"This conjunction in my service will tend to the better uniting you among yourselves, and the strengthening you against your common adversaries."

How this proposal from the throne to make room for the admission of all protestants without distinction into offices and places of trust was taken by the two Houses, may be seen by their joint address, presented the 19th of April, 1689; in which, after their most humble thanks rendered to his Majesty for his declaration, and repeated assurances that he would maintain the church of England established by law, they add—

"We humbly pray your Majesty will be graciously pleased to continue your care for the preservation of the same, whereby

you will effectually establish your throne, by securing the hearts of your Majesty's subjects within these your realms, who can no better way show their zeal for your service than by a firm adherence to that church whose constitution is best suited to the support of this monarchy.

"We likewise humbly pray that according to the ancient practice and usage of this kingdom in time of parliament, your majesty will be graciously pleased to issue forth your writs as soon as conveniently may be for calling a convocation of the clergy of this kingdom to be advised with in ecclesiastical matters, assuring your majesty that it is our intention forthwith to proceed to the consideration of giving ease to protestant dissenters."

The king had desired room for the admission of all protestants into offices of trust; his two Houses humbly pray him to continue his care for the preservation of the church of England, which would effectually establish his throne; and with respect to dissenters, they promise to proceed to the consideration of giving them ease.

The king's answer, signed by himself, and delivered to the House of Lords, April 20, 1689, was—

"Though I have had many occasions of assuring you that I will maintain the church of England as by law established, yet I am well pleased with every opportunity of repeating those promises, which I am resolved to perform by supporting this church, whose loyalty, I doubt not, will enable me to answer your just expectations. And as my design in coming hither was to rescue you from the miseries you labored under, so it is a great satisfaction to me that by the success God has given me, I am in a station of defending this church, which has effectually shown a zeal against popery, and shall always be my peculiar care; and I do hope the ease you design to dissenters will contribute very much to the establishment of this church, which therefore I do earnestly recommend to you, that the occasions of differences and mutual animosities may be removed, and as soon as conveniently may be I will summon a convocation."

In consequence of this, the act of indulgence, which gave ease to dissenters, but left no room for their admission into

offices of trust, was prepared, and passed the royal assent, May 24, 1689; and the king, as far as I can recollect, never made any other attempt in favor of dissenters.

SECTION V.

The intention of the Occasional Act briefly considered.

That nothing might pass unanswered that fell from my pen, his lordship has taken pains to give a new meaning even to the occasional act, as it is commonly called. I had observed that "when the doctrine of occasional conformity for places prevailed, it broke in on the evidence (required by the corporation and test acts) just as the doctrine of equivocation and mental reservation broke in on the evidence of an oath." In answer to this his lordship says, "that receiving in the church is no evidence of constant communion with it," which has been already considered: and he concludes that the "act of occasionally receiving gave the evidence required by the test act;" the contrary to which the reader has seen asserted both by Lords and Commons in their preambles to an occasional bill, anno 1702. And his lordship himself tells us that should papists once come to receive occasionally, the evidence would then be broken through, and new methods of exclusion must be found out; which difference between the occasional conformity of papists and dissenters he grounds on this, that the test act did intend to exclude papists, and not dissenters. His lordship was conscious this reason would not bear being applied to the corporation act, which was made peculiarly to exclude dissenters, and therefore he very wisely confines his observation to the test act only. And if what I have said of the intention of the test act be true, his lordship must own the occasional conformity of dissenters did break in on the evidence of that also; so that this argument is only the old account over again, that the test act had no relation to dissenters.

His lordship asks me with what justice the doing a thing accounted lawful by myself can be said to be criminal. In answer to which I say, that whether occasional conformity be criminal

or not criminal, is not my present business to inquire; be it never so innocent a practice, nay, be it highly commendable, yet still it broke in on the evidence required by the law; and in this respect only I compared it to mental reservation. And if nothing is criminal which a man accounts to be lawful, his lordship will find it hard to prove even mental reservation to be criminal in any particular case; but will he for that reason say that it is no evasion of the evidence of an oath required by law, because he who swears with mental reservation does every thing required by law? that is, repeats the words of the oath, kisses the book, &c.

But to proceed.

Either his lordship or the occasional act is chargeable with great inconsistency; for at p. 55. we are told that it was resolved (as the ground of the occasional act) to confine all offices to constant conformists: at p. 60. we are assured that the act allowed such a behavior in private, as supposes the man in office not intirely satisfied with a total uninterrupted conformity. What this private behavior is, which is inconsistent with constant conformity, and allowed by the act, I know not. Conformity is in its nature a public thing; it relates to public assemblies and worship, and meddles not with men's private behavior in their closets or in their families: how then should a man's private behavior show him to be dissatisfied with constant conformity, in which his private behavior has no concern. It may just as well be proved from a clergyman's wearing a morning-gown in his study, that he is no approver of the canonical apparel; especially, should he pray with his family in that dress, it would follow in his lordship's method that he was an enemy to the surplice. His lordship knows that the church does not restrain her members from using other prayers than the liturgy in private; he knows that many of the best conformists do use other devotions in their families; how then can any thing of this sort show a man not to be satisfied with a constant conformity, when the most constant conformists are known to approve in themselves and others such practices?

The ground of all this is, as his lordship informs us, "that the act leaves persons in office the liberty of having such wor-

ship as themselves like in private, and allowing a congregation of nine above their own family." But does this suppose persons in office to be dissatisfied with constant conforming? His lordship might as well say that all our acts of uniformity, and all other laws and canons relating to the church, are built on a supposition that the people are dissatisfied with constant conformity, since the members of the church are not restrained by any of these laws from the like liberty; and much more strongly might he prove that all the church of England divines, who have composed or recommended forms of family prayer different from those of the liturgy, were dissatisfied with constant conformity.

The clause in the occasional act on which his lordship founds this objection, was inserted to prevent the laws being abused by men in office on one hand, and by malicious informers on the other, and therefore it fixes what shall be adjudged in law a conventicle; and it has made every meeting for the exercise of religion, where the liturgy is not used, to be a conventicle, if ten or more besides the family are present at it; which is a proper provision—

1. That men in office may not, under the pretence of family devotion, keep conventicles in their houses; and,

2. That they may not be liable to prosecutions or forfeitures for not confining themselves to the liturgy in their family prayers; which no law whatever requires they should do.

But this clause appears to his lordship in another light, and he thinks that it "supposes many persons to be well qualified for offices, who like another church better than that established." But how a man's not liking the church established is to be inferred from his not using the liturgy in his family, which no law of the church requires him so to use, is a secret not yet disclosed.

But I wonder his lordship did not, for the advantage of his argument, lay hold rather on another provision there is in the act. For as a family meeting for devotion shall not be adjudged in law to be a conventicle, although the liturgy be not used, provided there be not present ten or more besides the family; so neither shall any meeting, not being of ten or more

in number, in any place or house not inhabited by a family, be adjudged a conventicle in law, though other prayers than those prescribed in the liturgy should be used at such meeting. Had his lordship been made sensible of this provision, he would, it is probable, have told us that it amounted to an express allowance to men in office to go to conventicles; since their meeting in a company not exceeding nine in any noted conventicle in town or country would not amount to a forfeiture by this act. His lordship has not used this argument, and therefore I am not in his debt for an answer to it; but to prevent any ill use being made of this part of the act, I shall give a short account of it.

In the 13th and 14th Car. II. there passed an act, intituled 'An Act for preventing mischiefs and dangers that may arise by certain persons called quakers and others refusing to take lawful oaths;' in which it is, among other things, enacted that if the persons commonly called quakers do assemble themselves under pretence of religious worship not authorised by the laws of the realm, the party offending being convicted shall forfeit for the first offence five pounds, for the second ten; for the third shall abjure the realm. But in this act it was provided that no person should be liable to prosecution for being at any meeting where the number of persons present did not amount to five; which limitation was to prevent unreasonable and malicious prosecutions, but could not be intended to give licence or encouragement to quaker's meetings, which the act restrained by very severe penalties. In an act of the 16th Car. II. and in another 22nd Car. II. each intituled, 'An Act to prevent and suppress seditious conventicles,' there is the same limitation; and therefore it is very absurd to suppose such limitation to be meant or intended as an allowance of conventicles, when it appears in the acts made to prevent and suppress conventicles.

From these acts the limitation was derived into the occasional act; the occasional bills in the beginning of the queen kept to the old limitation of five; but when the act passed, it was considered that there were few gentlemen in England but had often more than five above their own family

in their houses; on which account the number was increased from five to ten, and the alteration was extended to both parts of the provision, as well that for meetings in houses not inhabited, as that for family meetings. This I take to be the truth of the case; and if his lordship can make any advantage of it, it is at his service.

SUMMARY.

DESIGN of the writer's letter. Jurisdiction of the University of Cambridge over its own members stated. Value of this privilege. Jealousy shown by the University against all attempts to hurt or impair it. Reply to one who denies that there is so much as the appearance of any statute for the power of degrading. Full account of the affair between Dr. Bentley and the University, which has occasioned the present letter. Concluding reflexions on the rude manner in which the Chancellor, as well as the Vice-chancellor, is treated by the doctor. Surprise expressed at the application which he is making to the king and council in this cause.

THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AND UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE AGAINST DR. BENTLEY, STATED AND VINDICATED: IN A LETTER TO A NOBLE PEER.

Cambridge, October 27, 1718.

My lord,

In answer to your lordship's request, I sit down to give you some account of Dr. Bentley's case, and the expectation of his bringing our vice-chancellor, or the university, or both, to answer for their proceedings before the higher powers. Your lordship observes with how much scurrility the vice-chancellor and heads of the university, and every member who voted against the doctor, are treated by the writer of the letters in the public prints; yet your lordship will be so far from expecting that I should return any such usage to the doctor or his friends, that I know you have too great a sense of decency and good manners to forgive me if I should.

The university of Cambridge (the case is the same at Oxford) has been possessed time out of mind of a jurisdiction over its own members, not only in points of discipline and correction, but in personal pleas; so that all matters of debt, and contracts, and bargains whatever, between scholar and scholar, or between scholar and any other person, arising within the limits of the university's jurisdiction, are determinable within the chancellor's court. This court has been confirmed and established by almost as many charters as we have had kings in England since the conquest; but the last and the fullest was granted by Queen Elizabeth, and was followed by an act of parliament which confirmed and ratified the queen's charter, and all other charters granted by her royal progenitors, kings of England.

This privilege has been ever highly valued among us, not only as such, but as necessary to the very being and preservation of the university ; for do but consider, my lord, what a case we should be in, if a tutor were liable to be called to the courts above, and to run through the forms of law, for every debt contracted by his pupils, or every difference arising among the scholars themselves, or among the scholars and people of the town. The reason of the case is so strong, that not only the universities, but, as I am informed, most corporations in England, have a right to hold pleas in personal contracts, &c. within themselves ; and that there is not a fair in the kingdom but has a court incident to it, to determine matters arising in it on the spot, to prevent the intolerable burden which otherwise would lie on the subject, if persons meeting together at a fair from distant parts of the kingdom, were to repair to the courts in Westminster-Hall to have their market bargains and differences heard and determined. I mention this to show your lordship that the privilege granted to the universities of holding courts within themselves, is not a thing so peculiar to us that it ought to be envied by our fellow subjects, as if it exempted us from common subjection to the laws of our country, but that it is a privilege common to us and other corporate bodies, and founded not in mere partiality to the universities, but on wise and solid reasons, and such as have obtained the like privilege for other bodies throughout the kingdom.

When you reflect, my lord, how necessary and indeed essential to our very being this privilege is, you will not be surprised to be told how very jealous the university has been in all times of all attempts to hurt or impair it. This jealousy runs through all our statutes from the most ancient times, and there are no severer punishments than those ordained against the impugners and violaters of the jurisdiction of the university, and the authority of her courts and judges. As the court itself is of a mixed nature, and has both civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, so the punishments in this case provided are of both kinds. One of our oldest statutes, and which is still in force, expresses it thus : *Si quis de universitate jurisdictionem cancellarii contemnens propriam vel alienam injuriam cum deliberatione vel ex intervallo vindicaverit, &c. si monitus ad arbitrium cancellarii vel*

universitatis satisfacere noluerit cum effectu, infra triduum ab universitate expellatur ; cæteris pœnis juxta privilegia, consuetudines, et statuta malefactoribus imponendis, eisdem malefactoribus infligendis. And in the same statute it follows ; *contra cancellarii quoque prohibitionem colluctantes et alias sibi inobedientes et contumaces cum super hujusmodi secundum modum universitatis fuerint convicti, sine differentiâ personarum simili pœnâ coerceantur, si hoc meruerit protervitas contumacium.* In another statute of like antiquity we read thus: *Item excommunicamus et excommunicatos denunciamus omnes perturbatores pacis universitatis Cantabrigiæ, ac etiam omnes et singulos privilegia libertates seu consuetudines ejusdem universitatis approbatas et consuetas indebitè et malitiose impugnantes,* &c. And again, we find in the same body of statutes, in what manner they are to be dealt with who obstruct the jurisdiction ; *judicis jurisdictionem impedientes excommunicentur.*

I will not trouble your lordship with more quotations from our statutes, which are full of this matter ; but since the author of the letter in *St. James's Post*, October 23. thinks fit to intimate that there is not "so much as the appearance of any statute for the power of degrading," I beg leave to lay before you part of another statute full in this point. The title of it is, *ne clerici ad forum laicale trahantur.* The view of the statute is to prevent and punish all attempts in the members of the university to decline the university jurisdiction ; it decrees therefore, that not only all who actually prosecute others in other courts, but likewise that all who do *alios in hac parte quomodolibet vexare*, shall stand excommunicated till they make full satisfaction ; and they are to make satisfaction in two respects, (which I rather take notice of, because it shows the ground of the senate's interest in these matters,) to the party vexatiously molested, and to the university *cujus jurisdictio fuerit usurpata vel impedita :* and it farther declares that every offender of this kind be *a quocunque actu et honore doctorali, magisteriali, seu scholastico alienus habeatur extunc et exclusus.*

On this foundation your lordship will be better able to judge of the present affair. Dr. Bentley acquaints the public that

the original cause had relation to a fee paid him as Regius Professor; this is so far true, that the doctor would not have pretended, I believe, to this fee if he had not taken himself to be Regius Professor; but then it is equally true that this fee could not be so much as claimed by him as Regius Professor: the king's professor has a salary appointed him, and paid by Trinity College, and has no manner of claim or pretence to any fee whatever for any thing that he does or can do as professor. This fact I will venture to say you may depend on; so may you on this other, that considering him as father of the inceptors in divinity, (in which capacity only he could pretend to any fee,) he had no right to four guineas or any part of that sum by any statute or custom of the university: it was an arbitrary demand, begun by himself, supported by threats and violence; and he might just as well have claimed ten guineas as four; as he publicly declared indeed to the vice-chancellor and heads twelve months ago, that if they pretended to contradict him in taking four, he would insist on ten, or there should be no doctors in divinity created. It would be too long a story to tell your lordship now, on what gounds Dr. Bentley calls himself Regius Professor, or to set forth by what violent methods he seized the chair in opposition to those who had the right of election, and in direct contradiction to the charter of foundation, which excludes the Master of Trinity from being professor, for very good reasons; and among others this is a very substantial one, that the charter constituting a Regius Professor appoints the Master of Trinity in many cases to be the professor's visitor, in such manner that without him others, concerned as visitors, can do nothing: but I shall pass by this matter, because it is very probable that the doctor's present endeavors will render it necessary to open this whole scene before a proper authority.

Well then, suppose him to be Regius Professor.

About a year ago his Majesty was pleased to honor the university with his royal presence; and according to ancient usage in such cases, the university had an extraordinary commencement, and conferred degrees in all faculties on the persons named by his Majesty. In divinity there were many promoted to be doctors; who, according to custom, applied to the pro-

fessor to be presented and created. Dr. Bentley, besides the usual (and therefore statutable) fee for presenting and creating, demanded of each four guineas; complaint of this was brought before the vice-chancellor and heads, who were of opinion that the professor had no such right. On this Dr. Bentley (supposing there could be nothing done without him) declares none of the doctors should commence; that the vice-chancellor or heads should not judge of his demand; and that if any questioned his right to four guineas, he would insist on ten. Here then was at first setting out a renunciation of the university jurisdiction in a cause, which in every view was subject to their jurisdiction, and to theirs only. Many of the new doctors, who had a great way to go home, considering that to go home and to come again, when this demand should be determined, for their degrees would be a loss greater than four guineas, complied, and were presented and created; and others, that they might not lose their seniority, complied likewise, though they did it with difficulty; and therefore Dr. Bentley, going on to refuse submission to the university, gave promissory notes to some of them to return their money, if ever the cause should be determined against him by the king or his secretaries. I am not sure that I am exact in the form, for I have not seen any of these notes; but that they excluded the university jurisdiction, I am sure from all accounts. Now this was such an overt act of that crime which our statutes declare punishable with the greatest severity, that I think it had been, together with his speeches and declarations to the same effect in the senate-house before the whole university, a sufficient ground to have proceeded against him; and had the offence been then laid hold on, and the punishment since inflicted by the senate been at that time decreed against him, the university would have been so justifiable in their proceedings, that the doctor must have torn our constitution up by the roots before he could have had any redress but from a proper behavior and submission on his own part. That he was not proceeded against, I do for myself verily believe to be owing to a tenderness in the governors of the university, who were unwilling that any dispute should arise, from the happy occasion of his Majesty's presence among us. They foresaw (what experience has now

confirmed) that every thing of this kind would be charged as a mark of disaffection; they knew how certainly some would make the charge, and how easily others would receive it. They sat down therefore with a tameness, of which I defy the doctor and his friends to give a like instance since the foundation of the university.

But nothing being done in consequence of Dr. Bentley's promissory notes, and there being no likelihood of a determination from the court, where (by all I can learn) there was no inclination to take hold of a cause so peculiarly under the jurisdiction of the university; some of the sufferers began to complain, and Dr. Middleton many months ago declared that if he had not his four guineas returned, he would commence a suit against the doctor in the vice-chancellor's court. The letter in the *St. James's Post*, October 18th, charges our vice-chancellor with being in the concert to bring disgrace on Dr. Bentley, and as having the chief hand in this design: a suggestion so unworthy, and (as I believe) so false, that nothing can exceed it, and the doctor himself, if he pleases, is best able to justify the vice-chancellor. The vice-chancellor's proceedings show the quite contrary to what is charged on him; Dr. Middleton applied to him for a decree many weeks (I think months,) before he could obtain one: in the meanwhile the vice-chancellor applied to Dr. Bentley, and not once or twice, but often desired him to put an end to this cause, and not to permit it to come to a public hearing; and he had so far prevailed on him once, that (as Dr. Bentley's friends here aver) he sent the four guineas to the vice-chancellor to be disposed of as he thought fit; but the vice-chancellor not being at home, all went back again: and whereas it is suggested that the vice-chancellor said, that if ever Dr. Bentley's case came before him, he would condemn him, I have reason to suspect that this must arise from what the vice-chancellor said to the doctor himself in friendship, when he pressed him to make up the cause: and if it does, it is a sad instance of the effects of passion.

But at last the vice-chancellor told Dr. Bentley plainly that he could not in justice any longer deny a decree, and that if he was resolved to do nothing himself, he would grant one. Then Dr. Bentley threw in his way the objection from the ne-

cessary concurrence of nine heads to grant an arrest against any doctor or head of a college; on this the vice-chancellor calls a meeting of the heads, the objection is proposed and considered, the statute examined; and they declare that they see no ground for such a privilege in cases of this nature; and to prevent any such pretence to the obstruction of common justice, they declare themselves ready to give authority (if it was wanted) to grant such a decree: this was afterwards put into form and signed by nine heads. This objection being over, the vice-chancellor, that he might be wanting in no respect or even in civility to Dr. Bentley, wrote him a letter to acquaint him with what was done, and to desire him once more to consider whether he would end this cause himself before a decree issued. In answer to this letter Dr. Bentley comes to the vice-chancellor, expostulates with him in very high terms, and among many other very indecent expressions, told him at his own house, "that he would not be judged by him and his friends over a bottle," meaning the heads who had been in a consultation with the vice-chancellor on this affair. So that whilst he thought nine heads could not be had (many being out of town) to join with the vice-chancellor, so long their authority was necessary; but after they had joined, their authority was nothing: they were the vice-chancellor's bottle friends, and he would submit to none of them. This appears to me, after the best inquiry I can make, to be a just and true account of our vice-chancellor's conduct in this affair to the time of granting the decree; and I refer it to your lordship, or even to any man of common reason to judge whether here is any thing that looks like a man acting in concert to bring disgrace on Dr. Bentley.

But to go on: after this usage, and after all hopes of Dr. Bentley's doing any thing to put an end to the cause were over, the vice-chancellor granted his decree; and it was put into the hands of the beadle, who is the proper officer to serve it on such occasions. What Dr. Bentley's behavior was when he was served with the decree of the vice-chancellor, your lordship shall have in the words of the beadle's deposition, which he delivered on oath.

THE BEADLE'S DEPOSITION.

"On Tuesday the 23rd of September, I waited on Dr. Bentley, and told him I had orders from Mr. Vice-chancellor to arrest him at the suit of Dr. Middleton; he asked me why I came so late, that he had expected me all the afternoon, designing to write by the post to the king about it; I told him I brought it soon after I received it. Well, said he, it is illegal and unstatutable, and I will not obey it; let me see your arrest—are there nine heads to it? I told him I could not part with it, because it was my authority: well, said he, you shall have it again, only let me peruse it. Then he took it, and said it signified nothing, because there was not the consent of nine heads; and added, that the vice-chancellor used him worse than he would any common doctor of the town, that the vice-chancellor was not his judge, and that he should find the king alone was his judge, as he was his Regius Professor; that the vice-chancellor should not think that he would be concluded by what he and four or five of his friends determined against him over a bottle; that they acted foolishly, calling an arrest and a summons to his court the same thing, and that if he gave bail or went to prison, he satisfied the law. I told him I thought that was only in part, and then asked him for my arrest; he said, I might leave it with him, but that he would give it me whenever I called for it or wanted it, and so we parted.

"The next day in the morning I went and demanded it of him; he said he had farther occasion for it, and could not part with it. I told him he broke his word and promise with me, and pressed him to restore it: well, well, said he, you shall come to no damage by it; and he added, that he would give it me when Friday was over: I said he dealt uncivilly by me, and would put me on difficulties; but he absolutely refused to do it, and so I went off; and going to the vice-chancellor, told him what usage I had met with; he told me I must get another decree, which I did from Mr. Cooke of Magdalen's, but when I went with it to Dr. Bentley's, he would not see me, and I was refused admittance.

"On Thursday September the 25th, about two of the clock, Mr. Simpson and I went together to Dr. Bentley's, into the

room where they dine; the company was just gone out, and after a little time Mr. Simpson left me, and went to the vice-chancellor's. Not long after Dr. Ashenhurst, Mr. Lisle, and Mr. Witton came in to me. Mr. Lisle asked me what authority I had to stay in another man's house against the master's leave; I said, I was not to give him an account: he said he believed I could not justify it; I then asked him why he did not turn me out; well, said he, if you want your arrest, I will give it you, and have orders to tell you, you shall come to no damage so far as a hundred pounds go. I said if Dr. Bentley would give it me I would thank him, but would receive it from no other hand; they staid some time longer with me, and then going out, Dr. Ashenhurst said, well, Mr. Beadle, if you will not go out of the room, I will lock you in; which he did, but soon after returned and opened it. Awhile after this the master's servant came in and desired I would go away: I told him I had orders to stay longer; on which he said he was commanded to lock the door; and the doors on both sides of the room were locked on me for two hours at the least. After six of the clock I knocked, and the door was opened to me, not long after which Mr. Simpson came and called me away.

"On Saturday, September the 27th, at night, I went again to Dr. Bentley's. Mr. Witton came out and asked my business; I told him I came to speak with Dr. Bentley from the vice-chancellor; he came out again and said the doctor was busy, and had nothing to say to me; I told him I wanted my decree. He came out the third time and brought it in his hand; I said I would not receive it but from the doctor himself as he had promised; he said the doctor knew I came to complete the arrest, and would not then be seen by me, and that I must not think he would be arrested when I please, but that three or four days hence perhaps he would consent to it."

Edward Clarke.

Edvardus Clarke, Bedell. Arm. Jurat Dept' in præ Script. esse vera Juram'to ei delat' per me Robertum Grove, cui Dm^ns. Procanc. Potestat' dedit Juram'tum in hác parte deferend'

Ita, Test. Robertus Grove Not. Publicus
Acad. Cant' Reg'.

Your lordship will observe that Dr. Bentley peremptorily pronounces the vice-chancellor's decree to be illegal and unstatutable, and declares that he will not obey it; adding that the vice-chancellor was not his judge; which is followed with a great threatening to the vice-chancellor, and that "he shall find;" so sure did he make himself from the beginning that he should be supported in his disobedience to the jurisdiction of the university; though I assure your lordship we do not in this place conclude from these big words that the doctor had any encouragement from his and our superiors to treat the judge and jurisdiction of our courts in the manner he has done. But this is not all: he once more renounces obedience to the vice-chancellor in terms of great reproach to him and his heads; "the vice-chancellor must not think that he would be concluded by what he and four or five of his friends determined against him over a bottle." Pray consider this expression; the circumstance here added of their being over a bottle is very indecent and rude: but the great contempt and indignity lies in the suggestion that the vice-chancellor and heads had determined against him even before the decree for his appearance was served on him. How would this be indured in the case of any other judge? What must become of a man who should affirm of any other of the king's judges, that they came determined against a certain man before his cause was heard? If this in the present case can be justified or even excused, then is the university unfortunate indeed; since of all the courts in the kingdom hers is the only one that may be safely despised, contemned, and trampled on; her judge the only one whose office ought not to screen him from contempt and reproachful censure. But why do I expostulate? Surely there is not a man of sense in the kingdom who will vindicate such behavior.

The next thing observable in the deposition is, that Dr. Bentley got the decree from the beadle under pretence of reading, and on promise of returning it again, and then put it in his pocket, and absolutely refused to deliver it back: and when the beadle appeared concerned that he had so unwarily parted with the decree, being conscious that he should give but an ill account of himself to the vice-chancellor, the doctor encourages him to

despise the vice-chancellor, and tells him he shall come to no damage; which was not said by chance, for afterwards on another occasion he had the same encouragement from the doctor delivered in a message by Mr. Lisle, who acquainted him that he had orders to tell him that he should come to no damage as far as a hundred pounds went. So that first the doctor by a very unfair art (to say no worse) gets the decree into his possession; then tries to corrupt the officer, and to encourage him in not doing his duty by a promise to bear him harmless, and names how far he would go, to a hundred pounds. Your lordship is better acquainted with our laws and the practice of them than I pretend to be; and pray, my lord, what name would any other court give to such tampering with one of their officers? What would my lord chief justice say to one who should get his warrant out of the officer's hands, and then to ease the officer for his negligence promise to support him against the King's Bench? I suppose that in common law this would be reckoned a great contempt; in common sense I am sure it is so.

Hitherto the beadle was not ill used in his person; but when it appeared that he was not manageable, but that he persisted in demanding the decree, then a new scene opens: instead of good words and promises of a hundred pounds to secure him from damage, he is made a prisoner and locked up. The first who turned the key on him was Dr. Ashenhurst, though I suppose it is not his ordinary business to lock up the lodge: soon after he returns and opens the door; soon after which a servant of the master comes and locks the door again. I take it for granted now the defence for all this is to be, that any man may lock his own doors, or may order his servant to do it; though the true design was to impound the officer of the court, and nothing else was thought of when Dr. Ashenhurst locked the door; but when that was done they began perhaps to consider how to justify it; in order to which it was thought, I presume, more proper that a servant of the master's should shut the doors on the officer, for he would act a natural part in shutting up his master's house: Dr. Ashenhurst therefore comes to unlock the door; a servant soon follows to lock it again: but will such a thin disguise cover an action of this nature, when all the

circumstances so plainly speak the true sense and meaning of it ?

Your lordship has observed in the beadle's deposition, that a second decree was granted by the vice-chancellor in order to bring the doctor into judgment, on his having possessed himself of the first ; I am therefore to give your lordship an account what became of it. Mr. Clarke the beadle attended several times to serve it, and what usage he met with you have seen in his own words ; it was afterwards put into the hands of another of our university beadles, who served it on the doctor, on which he gave bail for his appearance ; and this circumstance is insisted on in behalf of the doctor as a cure for all that passed before, as that which made him *rectus in curiâ*, and wiped away all the contempt shown to the jurisdiction and judge of the university, and all the violence and vexation offered to the officer of the court in the discharge of his duty. But, my lord, if it shall be made evident to you that, notwithstanding the doctor put in bail for his appearance, yet he did not appear at the court day, this circumstance, I suppose, will pass for an aggravation, and not for an excuse or justification of his offence. The truth is that Mr. Lisle (one of the proctors of our court) now affirms that he was ordered by Dr. Bentley to appear for him, and was in court for that purpose; and for any thing that I know certainly to the contrary, he might inform the court of it. Be that as it will, yet this was no appearance. Our statute is very express that no man can appear in our court by his proctor who does not first appear in person, (unless it be in case of sickness,) and desire the judge to assign him a proctor ; and it is to be presumed that Dr. Bentley, who has himself been judge of this court, (though I think he hardly ever came at it,) at least it is certain that Mr. Lisle who has practised as a proctor of the court near four years, could not be ignorant of this matter : but I shall have occasion to mention this circumstance again, when I have the honor to inform your lordship of the proceedings of the vice-chancellor and the university.

It will take up a little time to transcribe the passages from our statutes, which must necessarily be sent to enable you to judge in this affair. But I hope within a post or two to give your lordship a satisfactory account.

In the meantime I cannot help expressing my indignation to you, at seeing the rude manner in which his grace the Duke of Somerset, our chancellor, is treated. When the doctor informs the world publicly that there is a report that his grace is to act a part beneath (as we are told) his honor and dignity, it is a poor salvo to add that he does not give credit to it. And when, in his zeal to charge the vice-chancellor, he sets him forth as attempting to involve his grace in those difficulties which his violence has brought on himself, he shows what an opinion he has of his grace's abilities; who, I assure your lordship, is too well known and too much esteemed here, for any vice-chancellor to dare to attempt to involve him in any action beneath his honor and dignity; and in this particular case he has acted a part so suitable to his own and the university's honor, that this place will ever retain sentiments of the highest respect towards him.

But indeed the doctor pays as little respect to his new patrons as he does to his old ones, when he endeavors to insinuate his cause into their favor, by telling them that if such a power be allowed as has been executed in his case, it will enable a vice-chancellor to discourage all opinions that do not suit with his scheme. What opinions the vice-chancellor has power to restrain and discourage, your lordship shall have in the words of our statute. *Prohibemus ne quisquam in concione aliquâ, in loco communi tractando, in lectionibus publicis, seu aliter publice infra universitatem nostram, quicquam doceat, tractet, vel defendat contra religionem, seu ejusdem aliquam partem in regno nostro publica auctoritate receptam, et stabilitam, aut contra aliquem statum, auctoritatem, dignitatem seu gradum vel ecclesiasticum vel civilem hujus nostri regni Angliæ vel Hiberniæ.* You see, my lord, that the vice-chancellor has authority to restrain no opinions but such as are contrary to the religion established, and the form of ecclesiastical and civil government. And the doctor has given a broad hint what use he would make of the professor's chair, if he may be but delivered from the fear of the vice-chancellor. But this insinuation is so opprobrious to the honorable persons whom he and his friends here publicly name as the espousers of his cause, that I shall

not explain it for fear of making myself a sharer in the crime of the author.

But what your lordship informs me of is still more surprising, that he is making application to the king and council in this cause. How is it possible? Can it enter even into Dr. Bentley's head to appeal to that very board to protect him in his contempt of the university authority, where there has been an appeal lodged for many months against himself, for his great abuse of authority in Trinity-College: does the doctor think that honorable board has leisure to attend to his complaint, which, according to his own account, can relate only to the legal methods of our proceeding; the cause itself being such that I dare venture to say he will not appeal to any court on the merits of it

SUMMARY.

ACCOUNT given of the origin of the undertaking, arising out of Woolston's trial and conviction. Second meeting of the party who had agreed to discuss the subject: proceedings preparatory to the discussion stated. Counsel for Woolston proposes that his antagonist should lay before the court the evidence which he intends to maintain. Counsel on the other side objects, inasmuch as he has no new claim to support, and has no reason to bring his own title into question: it is sufficient if he maintains it when called in question. Counsel for Woolston rejoins, that, since his antagonist requires him to admit things incredible, in virtue of the evidence he maintains, he ought to set forth his claim, or else leave the world to be directed by common sense. Decision of the judge, that counsel for Woolston would be right, if the truth of the Christian religion were the point in judgment, but is not in the present instance. Counsel for Woolston proceeds to observe on his antagonist's claim to prescription, but insists that prescription cannot avail against reason and common sense. Counsel on the other side waives all advantage from the antiquity of the resurrection, and the general reception which the belief of it has found in the world. Counsel for Woolston suspects some art even in this concession, conceiving that a main reason why men believe the resurrection arises from their not conceiving it possible that any one should attempt, much less succeed in, such a scheme, on the mere foundation of human cunning: is pressed by his antagonist to show what fraud of this kind ever prevailed universally in the world. Counsel for Woolston instances the

pretensions to inspiration set up by Pythagoras, Numa, &c. This answered: it only shows that revelation is by common consent the very best foundation of religion: difference of the cases stated. Case of Mahomet instanced: this also is answered, and the case of Dr. Emmes recommended to consideration. Counsel for Woolston observes that this case is so far to the purpose, that it shows to what lengths enthusiasm will carry men: this answered with regard to the resurrection. Counsel on both sides are called to the point in question by the judge. It is settled, by appeal to the jury, that the objections shall be argued and answered separately. Counsel for Woolston argues to the contrivance of the fraud from the beginning of Christ's ministry to his death: his arguments answered *seriatim* by the counsel for the resurrection, who observes in conclusion, that there must of necessity have been either a real miracle or a great fraud in the case; there is no medium; we must either admit the miracle, or prove the fraud. Counsel for Woolston asks, why might it not be enthusiasm in the master which occasioned his prediction, and fraud in the servants who put it in execution? Answer: this is new matter, and not a reply: this transaction was represented as a fraud throughout; now it is supposed that Christ was an honest enthusiast, and his disciples only cheats. Counsel for Woolston professes himself ready to go on to prove the fraud. Particulars of our Saviour's crucifixion, death, and burial, allowed to have been accurately recorded. Counsel for Woolston goes on with his arguments to prove that the fraud was executed in the period intervening between the burial and resurrection of our Saviour. These arguments answered by his antagonist. Whatever credit his objections may gain in this age, it is shown that they had none when they were first spread abroad; and that the very persons with whom the story of our Saviour's body being stolen originated, did not believe it themselves. Counsel for Woolston offers a few words in reply to his antagonist's

observations on the case of Lazarus, the seal of the sepulchre, the character of the disciples, King Agrippa's complaisance to Paul, and Gamaliel's advice. Last period of time considered, beginning from the resurrection and taking in the ministry of the Apostles. The last and main article of the case entered on, namely, the nature of the evidence which they gave to the world in favor of the resurrection. Preliminary complaint, that evidence, which relates to the most essential point of Christianity, was not put beyond all exception. Objections to the representation of facts and to the testimony of those who were appointed to be witnesses. Answer by the counsel for the resurrection to a concluding observation of his antagonist, that no evidence can be sufficient to prove a case like this, which is in its nature impossible, or at least impossible to be proved to the satisfaction of a rational inquirer. Answers to his objections against the representation of things and the testimony of witnesses. Concluding observations, by counsel for Woolston, on this reply. Address to the jury by the judge. Summing up of the evidence given on both sides. Verdict of the jury, that the disciples are not guilty of giving false evidence in the case of our Saviour's resurrection.

THE TRIAL

OF THE WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

We were, not long since, some gentlemen of the inns of court, together, each to other so well known, that no man's presence was a confinement to any other from speaking his mind on any subject that happened to arise in conversation. The meeting was without design, and the discourse, as in like cases, various. Among other things we fell on the subject of Woolston's trial and conviction, which had happened some few days before: that led to a debate how the law stands in such cases, what punishment it inflicts; and, in general, whether the law ought at all to interpose in controversies of this kind. We were not agreed in these points. One, who maintained the favorable side to Woolston, discovered a great liking and approbation of his discourses against the miracles of Christ, and seemed to think his arguments unanswerable. To which another replied, I wonder that one of your abilities, and bred to the profession of the law, which teaches us to consider the nature of evidence, and its proper weight, can be of that opinion; I am sure you would be unwilling to determine a property of five shillings on such evidence as you now think material enough to overthrow the miracles of Christ.

It may easily be imagined that this opened a door to much dispute, and determined the conversation for the remainder of the evening to this subject. The dispute ran through almost all the particulars mentioned in Woolston's pieces; but the thread of it was broken by several digressions, and the pursuit of things which were brought accidentally into the discourse. At length one of the company said, pleasantly, Gentlemen, you do not argue like lawyers; if I were judge in this cause, I would hold you better to the point. The company took the

hint, and cried they should be glad to have the cause re-heard, and him to be the judge. The gentlemen who had engaged with mettle and spirit in a dispute which arose accidentally, seemed very unwilling to be drawn into a formal controversy; and especially the gentleman who argued against Woolston thought the matter grew too serious for him, and excused himself from undertaking a controversy in religion, of all others the most momentous; but he was told that the argument should be confined merely to the nature of the evidence, and that might be considered without entering into any such controversy as he would avoid; and to bring the matter within bounds and under one view, the evidence of Christ's resurrection, and the exceptions taken to it, should be the only subject of the conference. With much persuasion he suffered himself to be persuaded, and promised to give the company and their new-made judge a meeting that day fortnight. The judge and the rest of the company were for bringing on the cause a week sooner; but the council for Woolston took the matter up, and said, Consider, Sir, the gentleman is not to argue out of Littleton, Plowden, or Coke, authors to him well known; but he must have his authorities from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and a fortnight is time little enough of all conscience to gain a familiarity with a new acquaintance; and turning to the gentleman, he said, I will call on you before the fortnight is out, to see how reverend an appearance you make behind Hammond on the New Testament, a Concordance on one hand, and a folio Bible with references on the other. You shall be welcome, Sir, replied the gentleman, and perhaps you may find some company more to your own taste; he is but a poor council who studies one side of the question only, and therefore I will have your friend Woolston, T—l, and C—s, to entertain you when you do me the favor of the visit. On this we parted in good humor, and all pleased with the appointment made, except the two gentlemen who were to provide the entertainment.

THE SECOND DAY.

THE company met at the time appointed; but it happened in this, as in like cases it often does, that some friends to some

of the company, who were not of the party the first day, had got notice of the meeting; and the gentlemen who were to debate the question, found they had a more numerous audience than they expected or desired. He especially who was to maintain the evidence of the resurrection, began to excuse the necessity he was under of disappointing their expectation, alleging that he was not prepared; and he had persisted in excusing himself, but that the strangers who perceived what the case was, offered to withdraw, which the gentleman would by no means consent to: they insisting to go, he said he would much rather submit himself to their candor, unprepared as he was, than be guilty of so much rudeness as to force them to leave the company. On which one of the company smiling, said, It happens luckily that our number is increased; when we were last together, we appointed a judge, but we quite forgot a jury, and now I think we are good men and true, sufficient to make one. This thought was pursued in several allusions to legal proceedings, which created some mirth, and had this good effect, that it dispersed the solemn air which the mutual compliments on the difficulty before-mentioned had introduced, and restored the ease and good humour natural to the conversation of gentlemen.

The judge perceiving the disposition of the company, thought it a proper time to begin, and called out, Gentlemen of the jury, take your places; and immediately seated himself at the upper end of the table. The company sat round him, and the judge called on the council for Woolston to begin.

Mr. A., council for Woolston, addressing himself to the judge, said,

May it please your lordship; I conceive the gentleman on the other side ought to begin, and lay his evidence, which he intends to maintain, before the court; till that is done, it is to no purpose for me to object. I may perhaps object to something which he will not admit to be any part of his evidence, and therefore, I apprehend, the evidence ought in the first place to be distinctly stated.

Judge.—Mr. B., What say you to that?

Mr. B., council on the other side:—

My Lord, if the evidence I am to maintain were to support any new claim, if I were to gain any thing which I am not

already possessed of, the gentleman would be in the right; but the evidence is old, and is matter of record, and I have been long in possession of all that I claim under it. If the gentleman has any thing to say to dispossess me, let him produce it, otherwise I have no reason to bring my own title into question. And this I take to be the known method of proceeding in such cases; no man is obliged to produce his title to his possession; it is sufficient if he maintains it when it is called in question.

Mr. A.—Surely, my lord, the gentleman mistakes the case. I can never admit myself to be out of possession of my understanding and reason; and since he would put me out of this possession, and compel me to admit things incredible, in virtue of the evidence he maintains, he ought to set forth his claim, or leave the world to be directed by common sense.

Judge.—Sir, you say right; on supposition that the truth of the Christian religion were the point in judgment. In that case it would be necessary to produce the evidence for the Christian religion; but the matter now before the court is, whether the objections produced by Mr. Woolston are of weight to overthrow the evidence of Christ's resurrection. You see then the evidence of the resurrection is supposed to be what it is on both sides, and the thing immediately in judgment is the value of the objections, and therefore they must be set forth. The court will be bound to take notice of the evidence, which is admitted as a fact on both parts. Go on, Mr. A.

Mr. A.—My lord, I submit to the direction of the court. I cannot but observe that the gentleman on the other side, unwilling as he seems to be to state his evidence, did not forget to lay in his claim to prescription, which is, perhaps, in truth, though he has too much skill to own it, the very strength of his cause. I do allow that the gentleman maintains nothing but what his father and grandfather, and his ancestors, beyond time of man's memory, maintained before him: I allow too that prescription in many cases makes a good title; but it must always be with this condition, that the thing is capable of being prescribed for; and I insist that prescription cannot run against reason and common sense. Customs may be pleaded by prescription; but if on showing the custom, any thing unreasonable appears in it, the prescription fails; for length of time works nothing

towards the establishing any thing that could never have a legal commencement. And if this objection will overthrow all prescriptions for customs; the mischief of which extends perhaps to one poor village only, and affects them in no greater a concern than their right of common on a ragged mountain; shall it not much more prevail when the interest of mankind is concerned, and in no less a point than his happiness in this life, and in all his hopes for futurity? Besides, if prescription must be allowed in this case, how will you deal with it in others? What will you say to the ancient Persians, and their fire-altars? Nay, what to the Turks, who have been long enough in possession of their faith to plead—

Mr. B.—I beg pardon for interrupting the gentleman, but it is to save him trouble. He is going into his favorite common-place, and has brought us from Persia to Turkey already; and if he goes on, I know we must follow him round the globe. To save us from this long journey, I will waive all advantage from the antiquity of the resurrection, and the general reception the belief of it has found in the world; and am content to consider it as a fact which happened but last year, and was never heard of either by the gentleman's grandfather or by mine.

Mr. A.—I should not have taken quite so long a journey as the gentleman imagines, nor, indeed, need any man go far from home to find instances to the purpose I was on. But since this advantage is quitted, I am as willing to spare my pains as the gentleman is desirous that I should. And yet I suspect some art even in this concession, fair and candid as it seems to be. For I am persuaded that one reason, perhaps the main reason, why men believe this history of Jesus, is, that they cannot conceive that any one should attempt, much less succeed in such an attempt as this, on the foundation of mere human cunning and policy; and it is worth the while to go round the globe, as the gentleman expressed himself, to see various instances of the like kind, in order to remove this prejudice. But I stand corrected, and will go directly to the point now in judgment.

Mr. B.—My Lord, the gentleman in justification of his first argument has entered on another of a very different kind. I think he is sensible of it, and seeming to yield up one of his

popular topics, is indeed artfully getting rid of another, which has made a very good figure in many late writings, but will not bear in any place, where he who maintains it may be asked questions. The mere antiquity of the resurrection I gave up; for if the evidence was not good at first, it cannot be good now. The gentleman is willing, he says, to spare us his history of ancient errors, and intimates that on this account he passes over many instances of fraud that were like in circumstances to the case before us. By no means, my lord, let them be passed over. I would not have the main strength of his cause betrayed in complaisance to me. Nothing can be more material than to show a fraud of this kind that prevailed universally in the world. Christ Jesus declared himself a prophet, and put the proof of his mission on this; that he should die openly and publicly, and rise again the third day. This surely was the hardest plot in the world to be managed; and if there be one instance of this kind, or in any degree like it, by all means let it be produced.

Mr. A.—My Lord, there has hardly been an instance of a false religion in the world, but it has also afforded a like instance to this before us. Have they not all pretended to inspiration? On what foot did Pythagoras, Numa, and others set up? Did they not all converse with the gods, and pretend to deliver oracles.

Mr. B.—This only shows that revelation is by the common consent of mankind the very best foundation of religion, and therefore every impostor pretends to it. But is a man's hiding himself in a cave for some years, and then coming out into the world, to be compared to a man's dying and rising to life again? So far from it, that you and I and every man may do the one, but no man can do the other.

Mr. A.—Sir, I suppose it will be allowed to be as great a thing to go to heaven and converse with angels and with God, and to come down to the earth again, as it is to die and rise again. Now this very thing Mahomet pretended to do, and all his disciples believe it. Can you deny this fact?

Mr. B.—Deny it, Sir? No. But tell us who went with Mahomet? Who were his witnesses? I expect, before we have done, to hear of the guards set over the sepulchre of Christ, and

the seal of the stone: what guard watched Mahomet in his going or returning? What seals and credentials had he? He himself pretends to none. His followers pretend to nothing but his own word. We are now to consider the evidence of Christ's resurrection, and you think to parallel it by producing a case, for which no one ever pretended there was any evidence. You have Mahomet's word; and no man ever told a lie but you had his word for the truth of what he said; and therefore you need not go round the globe to find such instances as these. But this story, it is said, has gained great credit, and is received by many nations; very well, and how was it received? Was not every man converted to this faith with the sword at his throat? In our case, every witness to the resurrection, and every believer of it was hourly exposed to death: in the other case, whoever refused to believe, died, or what was as bad, lived a wretched conquered slave: and will you pretend these cases to be alike? One case indeed there was within our own memory, which in some circumstances came near to the case now before us. The French prophets put the credit of their mission on the resurrection of Dr. Emmes, and gave public notice of it. If the gentleman pleases to make use of this instance, it is at his service.

Mr. A.—The instance of Dr. Emmes is so far to the purpose, that it shows to what lengths enthusiasm will carry men. And why might not the same thing happen at Jerusalem which happened but a few years ago in our own country? Matthew and John and the rest of them managed that affair with more dexterity than the French prophets; so that the resurrection of Jesus gained credit in the world, and the French prophets sank under their ridiculous pretensions. That is all the difference.

Mr. B.—Is it so? And a very wide difference, I promise you. In one case, every thing happened that was proper to convince the world of the truth of the resurrection; in the other, the event manifested the cheat: and on the view of these circumstances, you think it sufficient to say, with great coolness, that is all the difference. Why, what difference do you expect between truth and falsehood? What distinction —

Judge.—Gentlemen, you forget that you are in a court, and are falling into dialogue. Courts do not allow of chit-chat. Look

ye, the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus is before the court, recorded by Matthew, Mark, and others. You must take it as it is; you can neither make it better nor worse. These witnesses are accused of giving false evidence. Come to the point; and let us hear what you have to offer to prove the accusation.

Mr. B.—Is it your meaning, Sir, that the objections should be stated and argued all together, and that the answer should be to the whole at once? Or would you have the objections argued singly, and answered separately by themselves.

Judge.—I think this court may dispense with the strict forms of legal proceedings, and therefore I leave this to the choice of the jury.

After the jury had consulted together, the foreman rose up.

The foreman of the Jury.—We desire to hear the objections argued and answered separately. We shall be better able to form a judgment by hearing the answer, whilst the objection is fresh in our minds.

Judge.—Gentlemen, you hear the opinion of the jury. Go on.

Mr. A.—I am now to disclose to you a scene, of all others the most surprising. "The resurrection has been long talked of, and to the amazement of every one who can think freely, has been believed through all ages of the church."* This general and constant belief creates in most minds a presumption that it was founded on good evidence. In other cases the evidence supports the credit of the history; but here the evidence itself is presumed only on the credit which the story has gained. I wish the books dispersed against Jesus by the ancient Jews had not been lost; for they would have given us a clear insight into this contrivance.† But it is happy for us, that the very account given by the pretended witnesses of this fact is sufficient to destroy the credit of it.

The resurrection was not a thing contrived for its own sake. No! It was undertaken to support great views, and for the sake of great consequences that were to attend it. It will be necessary therefore to lay before you these views, that you may

* Sixth Discourse, p. 17. † Ibid. p. 4.

the better judge of this part of the contrivance, when you have the whole scene before you.

The Jews were a weak superstitious people, and, as is common among such people, gave great credit to some traditionary prophecies about their own country. They had besides some old books among them, which they esteemed to be writings of certain prophets who had formerly lived among them, and whose memory they had in great veneration. From such old books and traditions they formed many extravagant expectations; and among the rest one was, that some time or other a great victorious prince should arise among them, and subdue all their enemies, and make them lords of the world. In Augustus's time they were in a low state, reduced under the Roman yoke; and as they never wanted a deliverer more, so the eagerness of this hope, as it happens to weak minds, turned into a firm expectation that he would soon come.* This proved a temptation to some bold and to some cunning men, to personate the prince so much expected; and "nothing is more natural and common to promote rebellions, than to ground them on new prophecies, or new interpretations of old ones; prophecies being suited to the vulgar superstition, and operating with the force of religion."† Accordingly many such impostors rose, pretending to be the victorious prince expected; and they and the people who followed them perished in the folly of their attempt.

But Jesus, knowing that victories and triumphs are not things to be counterfeited; that the people were not to be delivered from the Roman yoke by sleight of hand; and having no hope of being able to cope with the emperor of Rome in good earnest, took another and more successful method to carry on his design. He took on him to be the prince foretold in the ancient prophets; but then he insisted that the true sense of the prophecies had been mistaken; that they related not to the kingdoms of this world, but to the kingdom of heaven; that the Messias was not to be a conquering prince, but a suffering one; that he was not to come with horses of war and chariots of war, but was to be meek and lowly, and riding on an ass. By this means he

* See Scheme of Literal Prophecy, p. 26. † Ibid. p. 27.

got the common and nccessary foundation for a new revelation, which is to be built and founded on a precedent revelation.*

To carry on this design, he made choice of twelve men of no fortunes or education, and of such understandings as gave no jealousy that they would discover the plot. And what is most wonderful, and shows their ability, whilst the master was preaching the kingdom of heaven, these poor men, not weaned from the prejudices of their country, expected every day that he would declare himself a king, and were quarrelling who should be his first minister. This expectation had a good effect on the service, for it kept them constant to their master.

I must observe farther, that the Jews were under strange apprehensions of supernatural powers; and as their own religion was founded on the belief of certain miracles said to be wrought by their lawgiver Moses, so were they ever running after wonders and miracles, and ready to take up with any stories of this kind. Now as something extraordinary was necessary to support the pretensions of Jesus, he dexterously laid hold on this weakness of the people, and set up to be a wonder-worker. His disciples were well qualified to receive this impression; they saw, or thought they saw, many strange things, and were able to spread the fame and report of them abroad.

This conduct had the desired success. The whole country was alarmed, and full of the news of a great prophet's being come among them. They were too full of their own imagination to attend to the notion of a kingdom of heaven: here was one mighty in deed and in word; and they concluded he was the very prince their nation expected. Accordingly they once attempted to set him up for a king, and at another time attended him in triumph to Jerusalem. This natural consequence opens the natural design of the attempt. If things had gone on successfully to the end, it is probable the kingdom of heaven would have been changed into a kingdom of this world. The design indeed failed, by the impatience and over-hastiness of the multitude, which alarmed not only the chief of the Jews, but the Roman governor also.

The case being come to this point, and Jesus seeing that he

* See Discourse of the Grounds, &c. Ch. iv.

could not escape being put to death, he declared that the ancient prophets had foretold that the Messias should die on a cross, and that he should rise again on the third day. Here was the foundation laid for the continuing this plot, which otherwise had died with its author. This was his legacy to his followers; which having been well managed by them and their successors, has at last produced a kingdom indeed, a kingdom of priests, who have governed the world for many ages, and have been strong enough to set kings and emperors at defiance. But so it happens, the ancient prophets appealed to are still extant; and there being no such prophecies of the death and resurrection of the Messias, they are a standing evidence against this story. As he expected, so it happened that he died on a cross; and the prosecuting of this contrivance was left to the management of his disciples and followers. Their part is next to be considered—

Mr. B.—My lord, since it is your opinion that the objections should be considered singly, and the gentleman has carried his scheme down to the death of Christ, I think he is come to a proper rest; and that it is agreeable to your intention that I should be admitted to answer.

Judge.—You say right, Sir. Let us hear what you answer to this charge.

Mr. B.—My lord, I was unwilling to disturb the gentleman by breaking in on his scheme; otherwise I should have reminded him that this court sits to examine evidence, and not to be entertained with fine imaginations. You have had a scheme laid before you, but not one bit of evidence to support any part of it; no, not so much as a pretence to any evidence. The gentleman, I remember, was very sorry that the old books of the Jews were lost, which would, as he supposes, have set forth all this matter; and I agree with him that he has much reason to be sorry, considering his great scarcity of proof. And since I have mentioned this, that I may not be to return to it again, I would ask the gentleman now, how he knows there ever were such books? And since if ever there were any, they are lost, how he knows what they contained? I doubt I shall have frequent occasion to ask such questions. It would indeed be a sufficient answer to the whole, to repeat the several suppo-

sitions that have been made, and to call for the evidence on which they stand. This would plainly discover every part of the story to be mere fiction. But since the gentleman seems to have endeavored to bring under one view the many insinuations which have of late been spread abroad by different hands, and to work the whole into a consistent scheme, I will, if your patience shall permit, examine this plot, and see to whom the honor of the contrivance belongs.

The gentleman begins with expressing his "amazement, that the resurrection has been believed in all ages of the church." If you ask him why, he must answer, because the account of it is a forgery; for it is no amazement to him surely, that a true account should be generally well received. So that this remark proceeds indeed from confidence rather than amazement, and comes only to this, that he is sure there was no resurrection; and I am sure this is no evidence that there was none. Whether he is mistaken in his confidence, or I in mine, the court must judge.

The gentleman's observation, that the general belief of the resurrection creates a presumption that it stands on good evidence, and therefore people look no farther, but follow their fathers, as their fathers did their grandfathers before them, is in great measure true; but it is a truth nothing to his purpose. He allows that the resurrection has been believed in all ages of the church; that is, from the very time of the resurrection: what then prevailed with those who first received it? They certainly did not follow the example of their fathers. Here then is the point, how did this fact gain credit in the world at first? Credit it has gained, without doubt. If the multitude at present go into this belief through prejudice, example, and for company sake, they do in this case no more nor otherwise than they do in all cases. And it cannot be denied but that truth may be received through prejudice as it is called, that is, without examining the proof or merits of the cause, as well as falsehood. What general truth is there, the merits of which all the world, or the hundredth part, has examined? It is smartly said somewhere, that the priest only continues what the nurse began; but the life of the remark consists in the quaintness of the antithesis between the nurse and the priest, and owes its support

much more to sound than to sense. For is it possible that children should not hear something of the common and popular opinions of their country, whether those opinions be true or false? Do they not learn the common maxims of reason this way? Perhaps every man first learned from his nurse that two and two make four; and whenever she divides an apple among her children, she instils into them this prejudice, that the whole is equal to its parts, and all the parts equal to the whole; and yet Sir Isaac Newton (shame on him!) what work has he made, what a building has he erected on the foundation of this nursery-learning? As to religion, there never was a religion, there never will be one, whether true or false, publicly owned in any country but children have heard and ever will hear more or less of it from those who are placed about them. And if this is and ever must be the case, whether the religion be true or false, it is highly absurd to lay stress on this observation, when the question is about the truth of any religion; for the observation is indifferent to both sides of the question.

We are now, I think, got through the common-place learning, which must for ever, it seems, attend on questions of this nature; and are coming to the very merits of the cause.

And here the gentleman on the other side thought proper to begin with an account of the people of the Jews; the people in whose country the fact is laid, and who were originally and in some respects principally concerned in its consequences.

They were, he says, a weak superstitious people, and lived under the influence of certain pretended prophecies and predictions; that on this ground they had, some time before the appearance of Christ Jesus, conceived great expectations of the coming of a victorious prince, who should deliver them from the Roman yoke, and make them all kings and princes. He goes on then to observe, how liable the people were, in this state of things, to be imposed on and led into rebellion by any one who was bold enough to take on him to personate the prince expected. He observes farther, that in fact many such impostors did arise, and deceived multitudes to their ruin and destruction.

I have laid these things together, because I do not intend to dispute these matters with the gentleman. Whether the Jews

were a weak and superstitious people, and influenced by false prophecies, or whether they had true prophecies among them, is not material to the present question. It is enough for the gentleman's argument, if I allow the fact to be as he has stated it; that they did expect a victorious prince, that they were on this account exposed to be practised on by pretenders, and in fact were often so deluded.

This foundation being laid, it was natural to expect, and I believe your lordship and every one present did expect, that the gentleman would go on to show that Jesus laid hold of this opportunity, struck in with the opinion of the people, and professed himself to be the prince who was to work their deliverance. But so far, it seems, is this from being the case, that the charge on Jesus is, that he took the contrary part, and set up in opposition to all the popular notions and prejudices of his country; that he interpreted the prophecies to another sense and meaning than his countrymen did; and by his expositions took away all hopes of their ever seeing the victorious deliverer so much wanted and expected.

I know not how to bring the gentleman's premises and his conclusion to any agreement; they seem to be at a great variance at present. If it be the likeliest method for an impostor to succeed, to build on the popular opinions, prejudices, and prophecies of the people; then surely an impostor cannot possibly take a worse method than to set up in opposition to all the prejudices and prophecies of the country. Where was the art and cunning then of taking this method? Could any thing be expected from it but hatred, contempt, and persecution? and did Christ in fact meet with any other treatment from the Jews? And yet when he found, as the gentleman allows he did, that he must perish in this attempt, did he change his note? Did he come about and drop any intimations agreeable to the notions of the people? It is not pretended. This, which in any other case which ever happened, would be taken to be a plain mark of great honesty or great stupidity, or of both, is in the present case, art, policy, and contrivance.

But it seems Jesus dared not set up to be the victorious prince expected, for victories are not to be counterfeited. I hope it was no crime in him that he did not assume this false character,

and try to abuse the credulity of the people: if he had done so, it certainly would have been a crime; and therefore in this point at least he is innocent. I do not suppose the gentleman imagines that the Jews were well founded in their expectation of a temporal prince; and therefore when Christ opposed this conceit at the manifest hazard of his life, as he certainly had truth on his side, so the presumption is that it was for the sake of truth that he exposed himself.

No; he wanted, we are told, the common and necessary foundation for a new revelation, the authority of an old one, to build on. Very well; I will not inquire how common or how necessary this foundation is to a new revelation; for be that case as it will, it is evident that in the method Christ took, he had not nor could have the supposed advantage of such foundation. For why is this foundation necessary? A friend of the gentleman's shall tell you. "Because it must be difficult if not impossible to introduce among men (who in all civilised countries are bred up in the belief of some revealed religion) a revealed religion wholly new, or such as has no reference to a preceding one; for that would be to combat all men on too many respects, and not to proceed on a sufficient number of principles necessary to be assented to by those on whom the first impressions of a new religion are proposed to be made."* You see now the reason of the necessity of this foundation; it is that the new teacher may have the advantage of old popular opinions, and fix himself on the prejudices of the people. Had Christ any such advantages, or did he seek any such? The people expected a victorious prince; he told them they were mistaken: they held as sacred the traditions of the elders; he told them those traditions made the law of God of none effect: they valued themselves for being the peculiar people of God; he told them that people from all quarters of the world should be the people of God, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom: they thought God could be worshipped only at Jerusalem; he told them God might and should be worshipped everywhere: they were superstitious in the observance of the sabbath; he, according to their reckoning,

* Discourse of the Grounds, p. 24.

broke it frequently : in a word, their washings of hands and pots, their superstitious distinctions of meats, their prayers in public, their villanies in secret, were all reproved, exposed, and condemned by him ; and the cry ran strongly against him that he came to destroy the law and the prophets. And now, Sir, what advantage had Christ of your common and necessary foundation ? What sufficient number of principles, owned by the people, did he build on ? If he adhered to the old revelation in the true sense, or (which is sufficient to the present argument) in a sense not received by the people, it was, in truth, the greatest difficulty he had to struggle with. And therefore what could tempt him but purely a regard to truth, to take on himself so many difficulties which might have been avoided, could he have been but silent as to the old revelation, and left the people to their imaginations ?

To carry on this plot, we are told that the next thing which Jesus did was to make choice of proper persons to be his disciples. The gentleman has given us their character ; but as I suppose he has more employment for them before he has done, I desire to defer the consideration of their abilities and conduct till I hear what work he has for them to do. I would only observe that thus far this plot differs from all that ever I heard of. Impostors generally take advantage of the prejudices of the people ; generally too they make choice of cunning dexterous fellows to manage under them ; but in this case Jesus opposed all the notions of the people, and made choice of simpletons, it seems, to conduct his contrivances.

But what design, what real end was carrying on all this while ? Why, the gentleman tells us that the very thing disclaimed, the temporal kingdom, was the real thing aimed at under this disguise. He told the people there was no foundation to expect a temporal deliverer, warned them against all who should set up those pretensions : he declared there was no ground from the ancient prophecies to expect such a prince ; and yet by these very means he was working his way to an opportunity of declaring himself to be the very prince the people wanted. We are still on the marvellous ; every step opens new wonders. I blame not the gentleman ; for what but this can be imagined, to give any account of these measures im-

puted to Christ? Be this never so unlikely, yet this is the only thing that can be said. Had Christ been charged with enthusiasm, it would not have been necessary to assign a reason for his conduct: madness is unaccountable: *ratione modoque tractari non vult.* But when design, cunning, and fraud, are made the charge, and carried to such a height as to suppose him to be a party to the contrivance of a sham resurrection for himself, it is necessary to say to what end this cunning tended. It was, we are told, to a kingdom; and indeed the temptation was little enough, considering that the chief conductor of the plot was to be crucified for his pains. But were the means made use of at all probable to attain the end? Yes, says the gentleman, that cannot be disputed; for they had really this effect. The people would have made him king. Very well; why was he not king then? Why, it happened unluckily that he would not accept the offer, but withdrew himself from the multitude, and lay concealed till they were dispersed. It will be said, perhaps, that Jesus was a better judge of affairs than the people, and saw that it was not yet time to accept the offer. Be it so: let us see then what follows.

The government was alarmed, and Jesus was looked on as a person dangerous to the state; and he had discernment enough to see that his death was determined and inevitable. What does he do then? Why, to make the best of a bad case, and to save the benefit of his undertaking to those who were to succeed him, he pretends to prophesy of his death, which he knew could not be avoided; and farther, that he should rise again the third day. Men do not use to play tricks in *articulo mortis;* but this plot had nothing common, nothing in the ordinary way. But what if it should appear that after the foretelling of his death (through despair of his fortunes, it is said,) he had it in his power to set up for king once more, and once more refused the opportunity? Men in despair lay hold on the least help, and never refuse the greatest. Now the case was really so; after he had foretold his crucifixion, he came to Jerusalem in the triumphant manner the gentleman mentioned: the people strewed his way with boughs and flowers, and were all at his devotion; the Jewish governors lay still for fear of the people. Why was not this opportunity laid hold on to seize the king-

dom, or at least to secure himself from the ignominious death he expected? For whose sake was he contented to die? For whose sake did he contrive this plot of his resurrection? Wife and children he had none; his nearest relations gave little credit to him; his disciples were not fit even to be trusted with the secret, nor capable to manage any advantage that could arise from it. However, the gentleman tells us a kingdom has arisen out of this plot, a kingdom of priests. But when did it arise? Some hundred years after the death of Christ, in opposition to his will, and almost to the subversion of his religion. And yet we are told this kingdom was the thing he had in view. I am apt to think the gentleman is persuaded that the dominion he complains of is contrary to the spirit of the gospel; I am sure some of his friends have taken great pains to prove it so. How then can it be charged as the intention of the gospel to introduce it? Whatever the case was, it cannot surely be suspected that Christ died to make popes and cardinals. The alterations which have happened in the doctrines and practices of churches, since the Christian religion was settled by those who had an authentic commission to settle it, are quite out of the question, when the inquiry is about the truth of the Christian religion. Christ and his Apostles did not vouch for the truth of all that should be taught in the church in future times. Nay, they foretold and forewarned the world against such corrupt teachers. It is therefore absurd to challenge the religion of Christ, because of the corruptions which have spread among Christians. The gospel has no more concern with them, and ought no more to be charged with them, than with the doctrines of the Alcoran.

There is but one observation more, I think, which the gentleman made under this head. Jesus, he says, referred to the authority of ancient prophecies to prove that the Messias was to die and rise again: the ancient books referred to are extant, and no such prophecies, he says, are to be found. Now whether the gentleman can find these prophecies or no, is not material to the present question. It is allowed that Christ foretold his own death and resurrection; if the resurrection was managed by fraud, Christ was certainly in the fraud himself, by foretelling the fraud that was to happen: disprove therefore

the resurrection, and we shall have no farther occasion for prophecy. On the other side, by foretelling the resurrection, he certainly put the proof of his mission on the truth of the event. Whether it be the character of the Messias, in the ancient prophets or no, that he should die and rise again, without doubt Jesus is not the Messias, if he did not rise again. For by his own prophecy he made it part of the character of the Messias. If the event justified the prediction, it is such an evidence as no man of sense and reason can reject. One would naturally think that the foretelling his resurrection, and giving such public notice to expect it that his keenest enemies were fully apprised of it, carried with it the greatest mark of sincere dealing. It stands thus far clear of the suspicion of fraud; and had it proceeded from enthusiasm and an heated imagination, the dead body at least would have rested in the grave, and without farther evidence have confuted such pretensions. And since the dead body was not only carried openly to the grave, but there watched and guarded, and yet could never afterwards be found, never heard of more as a dead body; there must of necessity have been either a real miracle or a great fraud in this case. Enthusiasm dies with the man, and has no operation on his dead body. There is therefore here no medium; you must either admit the miracle, or prove the fraud.

Judge.—Mr. A., you are at liberty either to reply to what has been said under this head, or to go on with your cause.

Mr. A.—My lord, the observations I laid before you were but introductory to the main evidences on which the merits of the cause must rest. The gentleman concluded that here must be a real miracle or a great fraud; a fraud, he means, to which Jesus in his lifetime was a party. There is, he says, no medium. I beg his pardon: why might it not be an enthusiasm in the master which occasioned the prediction and fraud in the servants who put it in execution?

Mr. B.—My lord, this is new matter, and not a reply: the gentleman opened this transaction as a fraud from one end to the other. Now he supposes Christ to have been an honest poor enthusiast, and the disciples only to be cheats.

Judge.—Sir, if you go to new matter, the council on the other side must be admitted to answer.

Mr. A.—My lord, I have no such intention. I was observing that the account I gave of Jesus was only to introduce the evidence that is to be laid before the court. It cannot be expected that I should know all the secret designs of this contrivance; especially considering that we have but short accounts of this affair, and those too conveyed to us through hands of friends and parties to the plot. In such a case it is enough if we can imagine what the views probably were. And in such case too it must be very easy for a gentleman of parts to raise contrary imaginations, and to argue plausibly from them. But the gentleman has rightly observed that if the resurrection be a fraud, there is an end of all pretensions, good or bad, that were to be supported by it. Therefore I shall go on to prove this fraud, which is one main part of the cause now to be determined.

I beg leave to remind you that Jesus in his lifetime foretold his death, and that he should rise again the third day. The first part of his prediction was accomplished; he died on the cross, and was buried. I will not trouble you with the particulars of his crucifixion, death, and burial. It is a well known story.

Mr. B.—My lord, I desire to know whether the gentleman charges any fraud on this part of the history; perhaps he may be of opinion by and by that there was a sleight of hand in the crucifixion, and that Christ only counterfeited death.

Mr. A.—No, no; have no such fears: he was not crucified by his disciples, but by the Romans and the Jews; and they were in very good earnest. I will prove beyond contradiction that the dead body was fairly laid in the tomb, and the tomb sealed up; and it will be well for you if you can get it as fairly out again.

Judge.—Go on with your evidence.

Mr. A.—My lord, the crucifixion being over, the dead body was conveyed to a sepulchre; and in the general opinion there seemed to be an end of the whole design. But the governors of the Jews, watchful for the safety of the people, called to mind that Jesus in his lifetime had said that he would rise again on the third day. It may at first sight seem strange that they should give any attention to such a prophecy; a prophecy big

with confidence and presumption, and which, to the common sense of mankind, carried its confutation along with it. And "there is no other nation in the world which would not have slighted such a vain prognostication of a known impostor." But they had warning to be watchful. It was not long before that the people "had like to have been fatally deluded, and imposed on by him, in the pretended resuscitation of Lazarus." They had fully discovered the cheat in the case of Lazarus, and had narrowly escaped the dangerous consequences of it. And though Jesus was dead, yet he had many disciples and followers alive, who were ready enough to combine in any fraud to verify the prediction of their master. Should they succeed, the rulers foresaw the consequences in this case would be more fatal than those which before they had narrowly escaped. On this account they addressed themselves to the Roman governor, told him how the case was, and desired that he would grant them a guard to watch the sepulchre; that the service would not be long, for the prediction limited the resurrection to the third day; and when that was over, the soldiers might be released from the duty. Pilate granted the request; and a guard was set to watch the sepulchre.

This was not all. The chief priests took another method to prevent all frauds, and it was the best that could possibly be taken; which was to seal up the door of the sepulchre. To understand to what purpose this caution was used, you need only consider what is intended by sealing up doors and boxes, or writings. Is it not for the satisfaction of all parties concerned, that they may be sure things are in the state they left them, when they come and find their seals not injured? This was the method used by Darius, when Daniel was cast into the lion's den; he sealed the door of the den. And for what purpose? Was it not to satisfy himself and his court that no art had been used to preserve Daniel? And when he came and saw Daniel safe, and his own seal untouched, he was satisfied. And indeed if we consider the thing rightly, a seal thus used imports a covenant; if you deliver writings to a person sealed, and he accepts them so, your delivery and his acceptance implies a covenant between you, that the writings shall be delivered, and the seal whole. And should the seal be broken, it would be a

manifest fraud and breach of trust. Nay, so strongly is this covenant implied, that there needs no special agreement in the case. It is a compact which men are put under by the law of nations, and the common cousent of mankind. When you send a letter sealed to the post-house, you have not indeed a special agreement with all persons through whose hands it passes that it shall not be opened by any hand, but his only to whom it is directed; yet men know themselves to be under this restraint, and that it is unlawful and dishonorable to transgress it.

Since then the sepulchre was sealed; since the seal imported a covenant, consider who were the parties to this covenant. They could be no other than the chief priests on one side, the Apostles on the other. To prove this, no special agreement need be shown. On one side there was a concern to see the prediction fulfilled; on the other, to prevent fraud in fulfilling it. The sum of their agreement was naturally this: that the seals should be opened at the time appointed for the resurrection, that all parties might see and be satisfied whether the dead body was come to life or no.

What now would any reasonable man expect from these circumstances? Do you not expect to hear that the chief priests and the Apostles met at the time appointed, opened the seals, and that the matter in dispute was settled beyond all controversy one way or other? But see how it happened. The seals were broken, the body stolen away in the night by the disciples; none of the chief priests present, or summoned to see the seals opened. The guards, when examined, were forced to confess the truth, though joined with an acknowlegement of their guilt, which made them liable to be punished by Pilate; they confessed that they were asleep, and in the mean time that the body was stolen away by the disciples.

This evidence of the Roman soldiers, and the far stronger evidence arising from the clandestine manner of breaking up the seals, are sufficient proofs of fraud.

But there is another circumstance in the case of equal weight. Though the seals did not prevent the cheat intirely, yet they effectually falsified the prediction. According to the prediction, Jesus was to rise on the third day, or after the third day.

At this time the chief priests intended to be present, and probably would have been attended by a great multitude. This made it impossible to play any tricks at that time, and therefore the Apostles were forced to hasten the plot; and accordingly the resurrection happened a day before its time; for the body was buried on the Friday, and was gone early in the morning on Sunday.

These are plain facts; facts drawn from the accounts given us by those who are friends to the belief of the resurrection. The gentleman will not call these imaginations, or complain that I have given him schemes instead of evidence.

Mr. B.—My lord, I am now to consider that part of the argument on which the gentleman lays the greatest stress. He has given us his evidence; mere evidence, he says, unmixed and clear of all schemes and imaginations. In one thing indeed he has been as good as his word; he has proved beyond contradiction, that Christ died and was laid in the sepulchre; for without doubt when the Jews sealed the stone, they took care to see that the body was there; otherwise their precaution was useless. He has proved too that the prediction of Christ concerning his own resurrection was a thing publicly known in all Jerusalem; for he owns that this gave occasion for all the care that was taken to prevent fraud. If this open prediction implies a fraudulent design, the evidence is strong with the gentleman; but if it shall appear to be, what it really was, the greatest mark that could be given of sincerity and plain dealing in the whole affair, the evidence will be still as strong, but the weight of it will fall on the wrong side for the gentleman's purpose.

In the next place, the gentleman seems to be at a great loss to account for the credit which the chief priests gave to the prediction of the resurrection, by the care they took to prevent it. He thinks the thing in itself was too extravagant and absurd to deserve any regard; and that no one would have regarded such a prediction in any other time or place. I agree with the gentleman intirely; but then I demand of him a reason why the chief priests were under any concern about this prediction: was it because they had plainly discovered him to be a cheat and an impostor? It is impossible. This reason would have

convinced them of the folly and presumption of the prediction. It must therefore necessarily be, that they had discovered something in the life and actions of Christ which raised this jealousy, and made them listen to a prophecy in his case, which in any other case they would have despised. And what could this be but the secret conviction they were under, by his many miracles, of his extraordinary powers? This care therefore of the chief priests over his dead, helpless body, is a lasting testimony of the mighty works which Jesus did in his lifetime. For had the Jews been persuaded that he performed no wonders in his life, I think they would not have been afraid of seeing any done by him after his death.

But the gentleman is of another mind. He says they had discovered a plain cheat in the case of Lazarus, whom Christ had pretended to raise from the dead; and therefore they took all this care to guard against a like cheat.

I begin now to want evidence; I am forbid to call this imagination; what else to call it I know not. There is not the least intimation given from history that there was any cheat in the case of Lazarus, or that any one suspected a cheat. Lazarus lived in the country after he was raised from the dead: and though his life was secretly and basely sought after, yet nobody had the courage to call him to a trial for his part of the cheat. It may be said, perhaps the rulers were terrified. Very well: but they were not terrified when they had Christ in their possession, when they brought him to a trial; why did they not then object this cheat to Christ? It would have been much to their purpose. Instead of that, they accuse him of a design to pull down their temple, to destroy their law, and of blasphemy; but not one word of any fraud in the case of Lazarus or any other case.

But not to enter into the merits of this cause, which has in it too many circumstances for your present consideration; let us take the case to be as the gentleman states it, that the cheat, in the case of Lazarus, was detected. What consequence is to be expected? In all other cases, impostors, once discovered, grow odious and contemptible, and quite incapable of doing farther mischief: so little are they regarded, that even when they tell the truth they are neglected. Was it so in this case? No, says

the gentleman, the Jews were the more careful that Christ should not cheat them in his own resurrection. Surely this is a most singular case: when the people thought him a prophet, the chief priests sought to kill him, and thought his death would put an end to his pretensions: when they and the people had discovered him to be a cheat, then they thought him not safe even when he was dead, but were afraid he should prove a true prophet, and, according to his own prediction, rise again. A needless, a preposterous fear!

In the next place, the gentleman tells us how proper the care was that the chief priests took. I agree perfectly with him. Human policy could not invent a more proper method to guard against and prevent all fraud. They delivered the sepulchre, with the dead body in it, to a company of Roman soldiers, who had orders from their officer to watch the sepulchre. Their care went farther still; they sealed the door of the sepulchre.

On this occasion, the gentleman has explained the use of seals when applied to such purposes. They imply, he says, a covenant that the things sealed up shall remain in the condition they are, till the parties to the sealing are agreed to open them. I see no reason to enter into the learning about seals: let it be as the gentleman has opened it. What then?

Why then, it seems, the Apostles and chief priests were in a covenant that there should be no resurrection, at least no opening of the door, till they met together at an appointed time to view and unseal the door.

Your lordship and the court will now consider the probability of this supposition. When Christ was seized and carried to his trial, his disciples fled, and hid themselves for fear of the Jews, out of a just apprehension that they should, if apprehended, be sacrificed with their Master. Peter indeed followed him, but his courage soon failed, and it is well known in what manner he denied him. After the death of Christ, his disciples were so far from being ready to engage for his resurrection, or to enter into terms and agreements for the manner in which it should be done, that they themselves did not believe it ever would be. They gave over all hopes and thoughts of it; and far from entering into engagements with the chief

priests, their whole concern was to keep themselves concealed from them. This is a well known case, and I will not trouble you with particular authorities to prove this truth. Can any man now in his right senses think that the disciples, under these circumstances, entered into this covenant with the Jews? I believe the gentleman does not think it, and for that reason says that seals so used import a covenant without a special agreement. Be it so; and it must then be allowed that the Apostles were no more concerned in these seals than every other man in the country, and no more answerable for them; for the covenant reached to every body as well as to them, since they were under no special contract.

But I beg pardon for spending your time unnecessarily, when the simple plain account of this matter will best answer all these jealousies and suspicions. The Jews, it is plain, were exceedingly solicitous about this event. For this reason they obtained a guard from Pilate; and when they had, they were still suspicious lest their guards should deceive them, and enter into combination against them. To secure this point they sealed the door, and required of the guards to deliver up the sepulchre to them sealed as it was. This is the natural and true account of the matter. Do but consider it in a parallel case: suppose a prince should set a guard at the door of his treasury; and the officer who placed the guard should seal the door, and say to the soldiers, you shall be answerable for the seal if I find it broken; would not all the world understand the seal to be fixed to guard against the soldiers, who might, though employed to keep off others, be ready enough to pilfer themselves? This is in all such cases but a necessary care; you may place guards, and when you do, all is in their power; *Et quis custodes custodiat ipsos?*

But it seems that, notwithstanding all this care, the seals were broken and the body gone: if you complain of this, Sir, demand satisfaction of your guards; they only are responsible for it. The disciples had no more to do in it than you or I.

The guards, the gentleman says, have confessed the truth, and owned that they were asleep, and that the disciples in the mean time stole away the body. I wish the guards were in court, I would ask them how they came to be so punctual in

relating what happened when they were asleep; what induced them to believe that the body was stolen at all; what, that it was stolen by the disciples; since by their own confession they were asleep and saw nothing, saw nobody. But since they are not to be had, I would desire to ask the gentleman the same questions; and whether he has any authorities in point to show that ever any man was admitted as an evidence in any court to prove a fact which happened when he was asleep. I see the gentleman is uneasy; I will press the matter no farther.

As this story has no evidence to support it, so neither has it any probability. The gentleman has given you the character of the disciples, that they were weak ignorant men, full of the popular prejudices and superstitions of their country; which stuck close to them, notwithstanding their long acquaintance with their Master. The Apostles are not much wronged in this account. And is it likely that such men should engage in so desperate a design as to steal away the body, in opposition to the combined power of the Jews and Romans? What could tempt them to it? What good could the dead body do them? or if it could have done them any, what hope had they to succeed in their attempt? A dead body is not to be removed by sleight of hand; it requires many hands to move it. Besides, the great stone at the mouth of the sepulchre was to be removed; which could not be done silently, or by men walking on tiptoes to prevent discovery; so that if the guards had really been asleep, yet there was no encouragement to go on this enterprise: for it is hardly possible to suppose but that rolling away the stone, moving the body, the hurry and confusion in carrying it off, must awaken them.

But supposing the thing practicable, yet the attempt was such as the disciples consistently with their own notions could not undertake. The gentleman says they continued all their master's lifetime to expect to see him a temporal prince; and a friend of the gentleman's* has observed, what is equally true, that they had the same expectation after his death. Consider now their case. Their Master was dead; and they are to con-

* Grounds, p. 33.

trive to steal away his body. For what? Did they expect to make a king of the dead body, if they could get it into their power? Or did they think, if they had it, they could raise it to life again? If they trusted so far to their Master's prediction as to expect his resurrection, (which I think is evident they did not,) could they yet think the resurrection depended on their having the dead body? It is in all views absurd. But the gentleman supposes that they meant to carry on the design for themselves in their Master's name, if they could but have persuaded the people to believe him risen from the dead. But he does not consider that by this supposition he strips the disciples of every part of their character at once, and presents to us a new set of men in every respect different from the former. The former disciples were plain, weak men; but these are bold, hardy, cunning, and contriving. The former were full of the superstition of their country, and expected a prince from the authority of their prophets; but these are despisers of the prophets, and of the notions of their countrymen, and are designing to turn these fables to their own advantage: for it cannot be supposed that they believed the prophets, and at the same time thought to accomplish or defeat them by so manifest a cheat, to which they themselves at least were conscious.

But let us take leave of these suppositions, and see how the true evidence in this case stands. Guards were placed, and they did their duty. But what are guards and sentinels against the power of God! An angel of the Lord opened the sepulchre; the guards saw him, and became like dead men. This account they gave to the chief priests; who, still persisting in their obstinacy, bribed the guards to tell the contradictory story of their being asleep and the body stolen.

I cannot but observe to your lordship that all these circumstances, so much questioned and suspected, were necessary circumstances, supposing the resurrection to be true. The seal was broken, the body came out of the sepulchre, the guards were placed in vain to prevent it. Be it so: I desire to know whether the gentleman thinks that the seal put God under covenant, or could prescribe to him a method of performing this great work; or whether he thinks the guards were placed to maintain the seal in opposition to the power of God. If

he will maintain neither of these points, then the opening the seals, notwithstanding the guard set on them, will be an evidence, not of the fraud, but of the power of the resurrection; and the guards will have nothing to answer for but only this, that they were not stronger than God. The seal was a proper check on the guards; the Jews had no other meaning in it; they could not be so stupid as to imagine that they could by this contrivance disappoint the designs of Providence. And it is surprising to hear these circumstances made use of to prove the resurrection to be a fraud, which yet could not but happen, supposing the resurrection to be true.

But there is another circumstance still which the gentleman reckons very material, and on which I find great stress is laid. The resurrection happened, we are told, a day sooner than the prediction imported. The reason assigned for it is, that the execution of the plot at the time appointed was rendered impracticable, because the chief priests and probably great numbers of the people were prepared to visit the sepulchre at that time; and therefore the disciples were under a necessity of hastening their plot.

This observation is intirely inconsistent with the supposition on which the reasoning stands. The gentleman has all along supposed the resurrection to have been managed by fraud, and not by violence; and indeed violence, if there had been an opportunity of using it, would have been insignificant. Beating the guards, and removing the dead body by force, would have destroyed all pretences to a resurrection. Now surely the guards, supposing them not to be enough in number to withstand all violence, were at least sufficient to prevent or to discover fraud. What occasion then to hasten the plot for fear of numbers meeting at the tomb, since there were numbers always present sufficient to discover any fraud; the only method that could be used in the case?

Suppose then that we could not give a satisfactory account of the way of reckoning the time from the crucifixion to the resurrection; yet this we can say, that the resurrection happened during the time that the guards had the sepulchre in keeping; and it is impossible to imagine what opportunity this could give to fraud. Had the time been delayed, the guards removed,

and then a resurrection pretended, it might with some color of reason have been said, why did he not come within his time? Why did he choose to come after his time, when all witnesses who had patiently expected the appointed hour were withdrawn? But now what is to be objected? You think he came too soon. But were not your guards at the door when he came? Did they not see what happened? And what other satisfaction could you have had, supposing he had come a day later?

By saying of this, I do not mean to decline the gentleman's objection, which is founded on a mistake of a way of speaking, common to the Jews and other people; who, when they name any number of days or years, include the first and the last of the days or years to make up the sum. Christ, alluding to his own resurrection, says, 'in three days I will raise it up.' The angels report his prediction thus, 'the Son of man shall be crucified, and the third day rise again.' Elsewhere it is said, 'after three days;' and again, that he was to be in the bowels of the earth 'three days and three nights.' These expressions are equivalent to each other, for we always reckon the night into the day when we reckon by so many days. If you agree to do a thing ten days hence, you stipulate for forbearance for the nights as well as days; and therefore, in reckoning, two days, and two days and two nights, are the same thing. That the expression, 'after three days,' means inclusive days, is proved by Grotius on Matt. xxvii. 63. and by others. The prediction therefore was, that he would rise on the third day. Now, he was crucified on Friday, and buried; he lay in the grave all Saturday, and rose early on Sunday morning. But the gentleman thinks he ought not to have risen until Monday. Pray try what the use of common language requires to be understood in a like case. Suppose you were told that your friend sickened on Friday, was let blood on Saturday, and the third day he died: what day would you think he died on? If you have any doubt about it, put the question to the first plain man you meet, and he will resolve it. The Jews could have no doubt in this case; for so they practised in one of the highest points of their law. Every male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day. How did they reckon

the days? Why, the day of the birth was one, and the day of the circumcision another; and though a child was born towards the very end of the first day, he was capable of circumcision on any time of the eighth day. And therefore it is not new or strange that the third day in our case should be reckoned into the number, though Christ rose at the very beginning of it. It is more strange to reckon whole years in this manner; and yet this is the constant method observed in Ptolemy's canon, the most valuable piece of ancient chronology, next to the Bible, now extant. If a king lived over the first day of a year, and died the week after, that whole year is reckoned to his reign.

I have now gone through the several objections on this head; what credit they may gain in this age I know not; but it is plain they had no credit when they were first spread abroad; nay, it is evident that the very persons who set abroad this story of the body being stolen, did not believe it themselves. And not to insist here on the plain fact, which was, that the guards were hired to tell this lie by the chief priests, it will appear from the after-conduct of the chief priests themselves, that they were conscious that the story was false. Not long after the resurrection of Christ, the disciples having received new power from above, appeared publicly in Jerusalem, and in the very temple, and testified the resurrection of Christ, even before those who had murdered him. What now do the chief priests do? They seize on the Apostles, they threaten them, they beat them, they scourge them, and all to stop their mouths, insisting that they should say no more of the matter. But why did they not, when they had the disciples in their power, charge them directly with their notorious cheat in stealing the body, and expose them to the people as impostors? This had been much more to their purpose than all their menaces and ill usage, and would more effectually have undeceived the people. But of this not one word is said. They try to murder them, enter into combinations to assassinate them, prevail with Herod to put one of them to death; but not so much as a charge against them of any fraud in the resurrection. Their orator Tertullus, who could not have missed so fine a topic of declamation, had there been but a suspicion to support it, is quite

silent on this head, and is content to florish on the commonplace of sedition and heresy, profaning the temple, and the like; very trifles to his cause, in comparison to the other accusation, had there been any ground to make use of it. And yet as it happens, we are sure the very question of the resurrection came under debate; for Festus tells King Agrippa that the Jews had certain questions against Paul, 'of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.' After this, Agrippa hears Paul himself; and had he suspected, much less had he been convinced that there was a cheat in the resurrection, he would hardly have said to Paul at the end of the conference, 'almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'

But let us see what the council and senate of the children of Israel thought of this matter, in the most solemn and serious deliberation they ever had about it. Not long after the resurrection the Apostles were taken;* the high priest thought the matter of that weight, that he summoned the council and senate of the children of Israel. The Apostles are brought before them, and make their defence. Part of their defence is in these words; 'the God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.' The defence was indeed a heavy charge on the senate, and in the warmth of their anger their first resolution was to slay them all. But Gamaliel, one of the council, stood up and told them that the matter deserved more consideration. He recounted to them the history of several impostors who had perished, and concluded with respect to the case of the Apostles then before them; 'if this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God.' The council agreed to this advice, and after some ill treatment the Apostles were discharged. I ask now, and let any man of common sense answer; could Gamaliel possibly have given this advice, and supposed that the hand of God might be with the Apostles, if he had known that there was a cheat discovered in the resurrection of Jesus? Could the whole senate have followed this advice, had they believed the discovery of the cheat? Was there not among them one man

* Acts v.

wise enough to say, how can you suppose God to have any thing to do in this affair, when the resurrection of Jesus, on which all depends, was a notorious cheat, and manifestly proved to be so? I should but lessen the weight of this authority by saying more; and therefore I will rest here, and give way to the gentleman to go on with his accusation.

Mr. A.—My lord, before I proceed any farther, I beg leave to say a few words in reply to what the gentleman has offered on this head.

The gentleman thinks that the detection in the case of Lazarus ought to have made the Jews quite unconcerned in the case of Jesus, and secure as to the event of his own resurrection. He says very true, supposing their care had been for themselves; but governors have another care on their hands, the care of their people: and it is not enough for them to guard against being imposed on themselves, they must be watchful to guard the multitude against frauds and deceits. The chief priests were satisfied indeed of the fraud in the case of Lazarus, yet they saw the people deceived by it; and for this reason, and not for their own satisfaction, they used the caution in the case of the resurrection of Jesus, which I before laid before you. In so doing they are well justified; and the inconsistency charged on the other side between their opinion of Jesus and their fear of being imposed on by his pretended resurrection, is fully answered.

The next observation relates to the seal of the sepulchre. The gentleman thinks the seal was used as a check on the Roman soldiers. But what reason had the Jews to suspect them? They were not disciples of Jesus; they were servants of the Roman governor, and employed in the service of the Jews; and I leave it to the court to judge whether the Jews set the seal to guard against their friends or their enemies. But if the seals were really used against the guards, then the breaking of the seals is a proof that the guards were corrupted; and if so, it is easy to conceive how the body was removed.

As to the disciples, the gentleman observes that the part allotted them in the management of the resurrection supposes an unaccountable change in their character. It will not be long before the gentleman will have occasion for as great a change

in their character ; for these weak men you will find soon employed in converting the world, and sent to appear before kings and princes in the name of their Master; soon you will see them grow wise and powerful, and every way qualified for their extensive and important business. The only difference between me and the gentleman on the other side will be found to be this, that I date this change a little earlier than he does ; a small matter surely to determine the right of this controversy.

The last observation relates to King Agrippa's complaisance to Paul, and Gamaliel's advice. I cannot answer for Agrippa's meaning, but certainly he meant but little ; and if this matter is to be tried by his opinion, we know that he never did turn Christian. As for Gamaliel, it is probable that he saw great numbers of the people engaged zealously in favor of the Apostles, and might think it prudent to pass the matter over in silence, and not to come to extremities. This is a common case in all governments ; the multitude and their leaders often escape punishment, not because they do not deserve it, but because it is not in some circumstances prudent to exact it.

I pass over these things lightly, because the next article contains the great, to us indeed who live at this distance, the only great question ; for whatever reason the Jews had to believe the resurrection, it is nothing to us, unless the story has been conveyed to us on such evidence as is sufficient to support the weight laid on it.

My lord, we are now to enter on the last and main article of this case ; the nature of the evidence on which the credit of the resurrection stands. Before I inquire into the qualifications of the particular witnesses whose words we are desired to take in this case, I would ask why this evidence, which manifestly relates to the most essential point of Christianity, was not put beyond all exception? Many of the miracles of Christ are said to be done in the streets, nay even the temple, under the observation of all the world; but the like is not so much as pretended as to this ; nay, we have it on the confession of Peter, the ringleader of the Apostles, that Christ appeared 'not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God.'* Why

* Acts x. 41.

picking and culling of witnesses in this case more than in any other? Does it not import some suspicion, raise some jealousy that this case would not bear the public light?

I would ask more particularly, why did not Jesus after his resurrection appear openly to the chief priests and rulers of the Jews? Since his commission related to them in an especial manner, why were not his credentials laid before them? The resurrection is acknowleged to be the chief proof of his mission; why then was it concealed from those who were more than all others concerned in the event of his mission? Suppose an ambassador from some foreign prince should come into England, make his public entry through the city, pay and receive visits, and at last refuse to show any letters of credence, or to wait on the king, what would you think of him? Whatever you would think in that case you must think in this, for there is no difference between them.

But we must take the evidence as it is; it was thought proper in this case to have select chosen witnesses; and we must now consider who they were, and what reason we have to take their word.

The first witness was an angel or angels: they appeared like men to some women who went early to the sepulchre. If they appeared like men, on what ground are we to take them for angels? The women saw men, and therefore they can witness only to the seeing of men; but I suppose it is the women's judgment, and not their evidence, that we are to follow in this case. Here then we have a story of one apparition to support the credit of another apparition; and the first apparition hath not so much as the evidence of the women to support it, but is grounded on their superstition, ignorance, and fear. Every country can afford a hundred instances of this kind; and there is this common to them all, that as learning and common sense prevail in any country, they die away and are no more heard of.

The next witnesses are the women themselves: the wisest men can hardly guard themselves against the fears of superstition; poor silly women therefore in this case must needs be unexceptionable witnesses, and fit to be admitted into the

number of the chosen witnesses to attest this fact. One part of the account given of them is very rational, that they were surprised and frightened beyond measure; and I leave it to your lordship and the court to judge how well qualified they were to give a just relation of what passed.

After this Jesus appears to two of his disciples as they were on a journey; he joins them and introduces a discourse about himself, and spent much time, till it began to grow dark, in expounding the prophecies relating to the death and resurrection of the Messias. All this while the disciples knew him not. But then going into a house to lodge together, at supper he broke bread and gave it to them; immediately they knew him, immediately he vanished. Here then are two witnesses more: but what will you call them? Eye-witnesses? Why their eyes were open, and they had their senses when he reasoned with them, and they knew him not. So far therefore they are witnesses that it was not he. Tell us therefore on what account you reject the evidence of their sense before the breaking of the bread, and insist on it afterwards? And why did Jesus vanish as soon as known; which has more of the air of an apparition than of the appearance of a real man restored to life?

Cleopas, who was one of these two disciples, finds out the Apostles, to make the report of what had passed to them. No sooner was the story told, but Jesus appears among them. They were all frightened and confounded, and thought they saw a spectre. He rebukes them for infidelity, and their slowness in believing the prophecies of his resurrection; and though he refused before to let the women touch him, (a circumstance which I ought not to have omitted,) yet now he invites the Apostles to handle him, to examine his hands and feet, and search the wounds of the cross. But what body was it they examined? The same that came in when the doors were shut; the same that vanished from the two disciples; the same that the women might not touch: in a word, a body quite different from a human body, which we know cannot pass through walls, or appear or disappear at pleasure. What then could their hands or eyes inform them of in this case? Besides, is it credible that God should raise a body imperfectly, with the very

wounds in it of which it died? Or if the wounds were such as destroyed the body before, how could a natural body subsist with them afterwards?

There are more appearances of Jesus recorded, but so much of the same kind, so liable to the same difficulties and objections, that I will not trouble your lordship and the court with a distinct enumeration of them. If the gentleman on the other side finds any advantage in any of them more than in these mentioned, I shall have an opportunity to consider them in my reply.

It may seem surprising to you perhaps that a matter of this moment was trusted on such evidence as this; but it will be still more surprising to consider that the several nations who received the gospel, and submitted to the faith of this article, had not even this evidence: for what people or nation had the evidence of the angels, the women, or even of all the Apostles? So far from it, that every country had its single Apostle, and received the faith on the credit of his single evidence. We have followed our ancestors without inquiry; and if you examine the thing to the bottom, our belief was originally built on the word of one man.

I shall trouble you, Sir, but with one observation more, which is this: that although in common life we act in a thousand instances on the faith and credit of human testimony, yet the reason for so doing is not the same in the case before us. In common affairs, where nothing is asserted but what is probable and possible, and according to the usual course of nature, a reasonable degree of evidence ought to determine every man; for the very probability or possibility of the thing is a support to the evidence; and in such cases we have no doubt but a man's senses qualify him to be a witness. But when the thing testified is contrary to the order of nature, and, at first sight at least, impossible, what evidence can be sufficient to overturn the constant evidence of nature, which she gives us in the uniform and regular method of her operations? If a man tells me he has been in France, I ought to give a reason for not believing him; but if he tells me he comes from the grave, what reason can he give why I should believe him? In the case before us, since the body raised from the grave differed from

common natural bodies, as we have before seen; how can I be assured that the Apostles' senses qualified them to judge at all of this body, whether it was the same or not the same which was buried? They handled the body, which yet could pass through doors and walls; they saw it, and sometimes knew it, at other times knew it not. In a word, it seems to be a case exempt from human evidence. Men have limited senses and a limited reason; when they act within their limits, we may give credit to them; but when they talk of things removed beyond the reach of their senses and reason, we must quit our own if we believe theirs.

Mr. B.—My lord, in answering the objections under this head, I shall find myself obliged to change the order in which the gentleman thought proper to place them. He began with complaining that Christ did not appear publicly to the Jews after his resurrection, and especially to the chief priests and rulers; and seemed to argue as if such evidence would have put the matter in question out of all doubt; but he concluded with an observation, to prove that no evidence in this case can be sufficient; that a resurrection is a thing in nature impossible, at least impossible to be proved to the satisfaction of a rational inquirer. If this be the case, why does he require more evidence, since none can be sufficient? Or to what purpose is it to vindicate the particular evidence of the resurrection of Christ, so long as this general prejudice, that a resurrection is incapable of being proved, remains unremoved? I am under a necessity therefore to consider this observation in the first place, that it may not lie as a dead weight on all I have to offer in support of the evidence of Christ's resurrection.

The gentleman allows it to be reasonable in many cases to act on the testimony and credit of others; but he thinks this should be confined to such cases, where the thing testified is probable, possible, and according to the usual course of nature. The gentleman does not, I suppose, pretend to know the extent of all natural possibilities, much less will he suppose them to be generally known; and therefore his meaning must be, that the testimony of witnesses is to be received only in cases which appear to us to be possible. In any other sense we can have no dispute; for mere impossibilities which can never

exist, can never be proved. Taking the observation therefore in this sense, the proposition is this: that the testimony of others ought not to be admitted, but in such matters as appear probable, or at least possible to our conceptions. For instance: a man who lives in a warm climate, and never saw ice, ought on no evidence to believe that rivers freeze and grow hard in cold countries; for this is improbable, contrary to the usual course of nature, and impossible according to his notion of things. And yet we all know that this is a plain manifest case, discernible by the senses of men, of which therefore they are qualified to be good witnesses. A hundred such instances might be named, but it is needless; for surely nothing is more apparently absurd than to make one man's ability in discerning, and his veracity in reporting plain facts, depend on the skill or ignorance of the hearer. And what has the gentleman said, on this occasion, against the resurrection, more than any man who never saw ice might say against a hundred honest witnesses, who assert that water turns to ice in cold climates?

It is very true that men do not so easily believe on testimony of others things which to them seem improbable or impossible; but the reason is not because the thing itself admits no evidence, but because the hearer's preconceived opinion outweighs the credit of the reporter, and makes his veracity to be called in question. For instance, it is natural for a stone to roll down hill; it is unnatural for it to roll up hill; but a stone moving up hill is as much the object of sense as a stone moving down hill; and all men in their senses are as capable of seeing and judging, and reporting the fact in one case as in the other. Should a man then tell you that he saw a stone go up hill of its own accord, you might question his veracity, but you could not say the thing admitted no evidence, because it was contrary to the law and usual course of nature; for the law of nature formed to yourself from your own experience and reasoning, is quite independent of the matter of fact which the man testifies; and whenever you see facts yourself, which contradict your notions of the law of nature, you admit the facts, because you believe yourself: when you do not admit like facts on the evidence of others, it is because you do not believe

them, and not because the facts in their own nature exclude all evidence.

Suppose a man should tell you that he was come from the dead; you would be apt to suspect his evidence. But what would you suspect? That he was not alive, when you heard him, saw him, felt him, and conversed with him? You could not suspect this without giving up all your senses, and acting in this case as you act in no other. Here then you would question whether the man had ever been dead. But would you say that it is incapable of being made plain by human testimony that this or that man died a year ago? It cannot be said. Evidence in this case is admitted in all courts perpetually.

Consider it the other way. Suppose you saw a man publicly executed, his body afterwards wounded by the executioner, and carried and laid in the grave; that after this you should be told that the man was come to life again; what would you suspect in this case? Not that the man had never been dead, for that you saw yourself; but you would suspect whether he was now alive. But would you say, this case excluded all human testimony, and that men could not possibly discern whether one with whom they conversed familiarly was alive or no? On what ground could you say this? A man rising from the grave is an object of sense, and can give the same evidence of his being alive as any other man in the world can give. So that a resurrection considered only as a fact to be proved by evidence, is a plain case; it requires no greater ability in the witnesses, than that they be able to distinguish between a man dead and a man alive: a point in which I believe every man living thinks himself a judge.

I do allow that this case and others of like nature require more evidence to give them credit than ordinary cases do. You may therefore require more evidence in these than in other cases; but it is absurd to say that such cases admit no evidence, when the things in question are manifestly objects of sense.

I allow farther that the gentleman has rightly stated the difficulty on the foot of common prejudice; and that it arises from hence, that such cases appear to be contrary to the course of nature. But I desire him to consider what this course of

nature is. Every man, from the lowest countryman to the highest philosopher, frames to himself from his experience and observation a notion of a course of nature, and is ready to say of every thing reported to him that contradicts his experience, that it is contrary to nature. But will the gentleman say that every thing is impossible, or even improbable, that contradicts the notion which men frame to themselves of the course of nature? I think he will not say it; and if he will, he must say that water can never freeze, for it is absolutely inconsistent with the notion which men have of the course of nature who live in the warm climates. And hence it appears that when men talk of the course of nature, they really talk of their own prejudices and imaginations, and that sense and reason are not so much concerned in the case as the gentleman imagines. For I ask, is it from the evidence of sense or the evidence of reason that people in warm climates think it contrary to nature that water should grow solid and become ice? As for sense, they see indeed that water with them is always liquid, but none of their senses tell them that it can never grow solid; as for reason, it can never so inform them, for right reason can never contradict the truth of things. Our senses then inform us rightly what the usual course of things is; but when we conclude that things cannot be otherwise, we outrun the information of our senses, and the conclusion stands on prejudice, and not on reason. And yet such conclusions form what is generally called the course of nature. And when men on proper evidence and information admit things contrary to this presupposed course of nature, they do not, as the gentleman expresses it, quit their own sense and reason, but in truth they quit their own mistakes and prejudices.

In the case before us, the case of the resurrection, the great difficulty arises from the like prejudice. We all know by experience that all men die and rise no more; therefore we conclude that for a dead man to rise to life again is contrary to the course of nature; and certainly it is contrary to the uniform and settled course of things. But if we argue from hence that it is contrary and repugnant to the real laws of nature, and absolutely impossible on that account, we argue without any foundation to support us either from our senses or our reason. We

cannot learn from our eyes, or feeling, or any other sense, that it is impossible for a dead body to live again: if we learn it at all, it must be from our reason; and yet what one maxim of reason is contradicted by the supposition of a resurrection? For my own part, when I consider how I live; that all the animal motions necessary to my life are independent of my will; that my heart beats without my consent and without my direction; that digestion and nutrition are performed by methods to which I am not conscious; that my blood moves in a perpetual round, which is contrary to all known laws of motion; I cannot but think that the preservation of my life, in every moment of it, is as great an act of power as is necessary to raise a dead man to life. And whoever so far reflects on his own being as to acknowlege that he owes it to a superior power, must needs think that the same power which gave life to senseless matter at first, and set all the springs and movements a-going at the beginning, can restore life to a dead body. For surely it is not a greater thing to give life to a body once dead, than to a body that never was alive.

In the next place must be considered the difficulties which the gentleman has laid before you with regard to the nature of Christ's body after the resurrection. He has produced some passages which, he thinks, imply that the body was not a real natural body, but a mere phantom or apparition; and thence concludes that there being no real object of sense, there can be no evidence in the case.

Presumptions are of no weight against positive evidence; and every account of the resurrection assures us that the body of Christ was seen, felt, and handled by many persons, who were called on by Christ so to do, that they might be assured that he had flesh and bones, and was not a mere spectre, as they in their first surprise imagined him to be. It is impossible that they who give this account should mean by any thing they report, to imply that he had no real body. It is certain then that when the gentleman makes use of what they say to this purpose, he uses their sayings contrary to their meaning. For it is not pretended that they say that Christ had not a real human body after the resurrection; nor is it pretended they had any such thought, except only on the first surprise of seeing

him, and before they had examined him with their eyes and hands. But something they have said which the gentleman, according to his notions of philosophy, thinks implies that the body was not real. To clear this point therefore, I must lay before you the passages referred to, and consider how justly the gentleman reasons from them.

The first passage relates to Mary Magdalen, who, the first time she saw Christ, was going to embrace his feet, as the custom of the country was: Christ says to her, 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and tell them,'* &c. Hence the gentlemen concludes that Christ's body was not such a one as would bear the touch. But how does he infer this? Is it from these words, 'Touch me not?' It cannot be; for thousands say it every day without giving the least suspicion that their bodies are not capable of being touched. The conclusion then must be built on those other words, 'for I am not yet ascended to my Father.' But what have these words to do with the reality of his body? It might be real or not real for any thing that is here said. There is a difficulty in these words, and it may be hard to give the true sense of them; but there is no difficulty in seeing that they have no relation to the nature of Christ's body, for of his body nothing is said. The natural sense of the place, as I collect by comparing this passage with Matt. xxviii. 9. is this: Mary Magdalen on seeing Jesus fell at his feet, and laid hold of them and held them, as if she meant never to let them go; Christ said to her, "Touch me not, or hang not about me now; you will have other opportunities of seeing me, for I go not yet to my Father; lose no time then, but go quickly with my message to my brethren." I am not concerned to support this particular interpretation of the passage; it is sufficient for my purpose to show that the words cannot possibly relate to the nature of Christ's body one way or other.

The next passage relates to Christ's joining two of his disciples on the road, and conversing with them without being known by them: it grew dark; they pressed him to stay with them that night; he went in with them, broke bread and blessed

* John xx. 17.

it and gave it them, and then they knew him; and immediately he disappeared.

The circumstance of disappearing shall be considered under the next head, with other objections of the like kind: at present I shall only examine the other parts of this story, and inquire whether they afford any ground to conclude that the body of Christ was not a real one. Had this piece of history been related of any other person, I think no such suspicion could have arisen; for what is there unnatural or uncommon in this account? Two men meet an acquaintance whom they thought dead; they converse with him for some time without suspecting who he was; the very persuasion they were under that he was dead, contributed greatly to their not knowing him; besides, he appeared in a habit and form different from what he used when he conversed with them; appeared to them on a journey, and walked with them side by side; in which situation no one of the company has a full view of another. Afterwards, when they were at supper together, and lights brought in, they plainly discerned who he was. On this occasion, the gentleman asks what sort of witnesses these are. Eye-witnesses? No; before supper they were eye-witnesses, says the gentleman, that the person whom they saw was not Christ: and then he demands a reason for our rejecting the evidence of their sense when they did not know Christ, and insisting on it when they did.

It is no uncommon thing for men to catch themselves and others by such notable acute questions, and to be led by the sprightliness of their imagination out of the road of truth and common sense. I beg leave to tell the gentleman a short story, and then to ask him his own question. A certain gentleman who had been some years abroad, happened in his return to England through Paris to meet his own sister there. She not expecting to see him there, nor he to see her, they conversed together with other company at a public house, for great part of a day, without knowing each other. At last the lady began to show great signs of disorder; her color came and went, and the eyes of the company were drawn towards her; and then she cried out, Oh, my brother! and was hardly held from fainting. Suppose now this lady were to depose on oath in a court of

justice that she saw her brother at Paris; I would ask the gentleman whether he would object to the evidence, and say that she was as good an eye-witness that her brother was not there as that he was; and demand of the court, why they rejected the evidence of her senses when she did not know her brother, and were ready to believe it when she did. When the question is answered in this case, I desire only to have the benefit of it in the case now before you. But if you shall be of opinion that there was some extraordinary power used on this occasion, and incline to think that the expression, ('their eyes were holden,') imports as much, then the case will fall under the next article; in which

We are to consider Christ's vanishing out of sight; his coming in and going out when the doors were shut, and such like passages; which, as they fall under one consideration, so I shall speak to them together.

But it is necessary first to see what the Apostles affirm distinctly in their accounts of these facts; for I think more has been said for them, than ever they said or intended to say for themselves. In one place* it is said, 'he vanished out of their sight;' which translation is corrected in the margin of our Bibles thus, 'he ceased to be seen of them;' and the original† imports no more.

It is said in another place that the disciples being together, 'and the doors shut,' Jesus came and stood in the midst of them. How he came is not said: much less is it said that he came through the door or the key-hole; and for any thing that is said to the contrary, he might come in at the door, though the disciples saw not the door open, nor him till he was in the midst of them. But the gentleman thinks these passages prove that the disciples saw no real body, but an apparition. I am afraid that the gentleman after all his contempt of apparitions, and the superstition on which they are founded, is fallen into the snare himself, and is arguing on no better principles than the common notions which the vulgar have of apparitions. Why else does he imagine these passages to be inconsistent with the reality of Christ's body? Is there

* Matth. xxviii. 31. † Ἄφαντος ἐγένετο.

no way for a real body to disappear? Try the experiment now; do but put out the candles, we shall all disappear: if a man falls asleep in the day-time, all things disappear to him; his senses are all locked up; and yet all things about him continue to be real, and his senses continue perfect. As shutting out all rays of light would make all things disappear, so intercepting the rays of light from any particular body would make that disappear. Perhaps something like this was the case; or perhaps something else, of which we know nothing. But be the case what it will, the gentleman's conclusion is founded on no principle of true philosophy; for it does not follow that a body is not real, because I lose sight of it suddenly. I shall be told perhaps that this way of accounting for the passages is as wonderful and as much out of the common course of things as the other. Perhaps it is so; and what then? Surely the gentleman does not expect that in order to prove the reality of the greatest miracle that ever was, I should show that there was nothing miraculous in it, but that every thiug happened according to the ordinary course of things? My only concern is to show that these passages do not infer that the body of Christ after the resurrection was no real body. I wonder the gentleman did not carry his argument a little farther, and prove that Christ, before his death, had no real body; for we read that when the multitude would have thrown him down a precipice, he went through the midst of them unseen. Now nothing happened after his resurrection more unaccountable than this that happened before it; and if the argument be good at all, it will be good to prove that there never was such a man as Jesus in the world. Perhaps the gentleman may think this a little too much to prove; and if he does, I hope he will quit the argument in one case as well as in the other, for difference there is none.

Hitherto we have been called on to prove the reality of Christ's body, and that it was the same after the resurrection that it was before; but the next objection complains that the body was too much the same with that which was buried; for the gentleman thinks that it had the same mortal wounds open and uncured of which it died. His observation is grounded on

the words which Christ uses to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side.'* Is it here affirmed that Thomas did actually put his hands into his side, or so much as see his wounds fresh and bleeding? Nothing like it. But it is supposed from the words of Christ; for if he had no wounds, he would not have invited Thomas to probe them. Now the meaning of Christ will best appear by an account of the occasion he had to use this speech. He had appeared to his disciples in the absence of Thomas, and shown them his hands and feet, which still had the marks of his crucifixion. The disciples report this to Thomas: he thought the thing impossible, and expressed his unbelief, as men are apt to do when they are positive, in a very extravagant manner. You talk, says he, of the prints of the nails in his hands and feet; for my part I will never believe this thing 'except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side.' Now in the first place here is nothing said of open wounds; Thomas talks only of putting his finger into the print, that is, the scar of the nails, and of thrusting his hand into his side. And in common speech, to thrust a hand into any one's side, does not signify to thrust it through the side into the bowels. On this interpretation of the words, which is a plain and natural one, the gentleman's objection is quite gone. But suppose Thomas to mean what the gentleman means, in that case the words of Christ are manifestly a severe reproach to him for his infidelity: here, says Christ, are my hands and my side; take the satisfaction you equire; thrust your fingers into my hands, your hand into my side; repeating to him his own words, and calling him to his own conditions; which to a man beginning to see his extravagance, is of all rebukes the severest. Such forms of speech are used on many occasions, and are never understood to import that the thing proposed is proper, or always practicable. When the Grecian women reproached their sons with cowardice, and called to them as they were flying from the enemy to come and

* John xx. 27.

hide themselves once more, like children as they were, in their mothers' wombs, he would have been ridiculous who had asked the question, whether the women really thought that they could take their sons into their wombs again?

I have now gone through the objections which were necessarily to be removed before I could state the evidence in this case. I am sensible I have taken up too much of your time; but I have this to say in my excuse, that objections built on popular notions and prejudices, are easily conveyed to the mind in few words, and so conveyed make strong impressions; but whoever answers the objections must encounter all the notions to which they are allied, and to which they owe their strength; and it is well if with many words he can find admittance.

I come now to consider the evidence on which our belief of the resurrection stands; and here I am stopped again. A general exception is taken to the evidence, that it is imperfect, unfair; and a question is asked, why did not Christ appear publicly to all the people, especially to the magistrates? Why were some witnesses culled and chosen out, and others excluded?

It may be sufficient perhaps to say that where there are witnesses enough, no judge, no jury complains for want of more; and therefore if the witnesses we have are sufficient, it is no objection that we have not others and more. If three credible men attest a will, which are as many as the law requires, would anybody ask why all the town were not called to set their hands? But why were these witnesses culled and chosen out? Why? For this reason, that they might be good ones. Does not every wise man choose proper witnesses to his deed and to his will? And does not a good choice of witnesses give strength to every deed? How comes it to pass then that the very thing which shuts out all suspicion in other cases, should in this case only be of all others the most suspicious thing itself?

What reason there is to make any complaints on the behalf of the Jews may be judged, in part, from what has already appeared. Christ suffered openly in their sight; and they were so well apprised of his prediction that he should rise again, that they set a guard on his sepulchre; and from their guards they learned the truth. Every soldier was to them a witness of the

resurrection of their own choosing. After this, they had not one Apostle, (which the gentleman observes was the case of other people,) but all the Apostles, and many other witnesses with them, and in their power. The Apostles testified the resurrection to them, not only to the people, but to the elders of Israel assembled in senate; to support their evidence they were enabled to work, and did work miracles openly in the name of Christ. These people therefore have the least reason to complain, and had of all others the fullest evidence, and in some respects such as none but themselves could have, for they only were keepers of the sepulchre. I believe if the gentleman was to choose an evidence to his own satisfaction in a like case, he would desire no more than to keep the sepulchre with a sufficient number of guards.

But the argument goes farther. It is said that Jesus was sent with a special commission to the Jews, that he was their Messias; and as his resurrection was his main credential, he ought to have appeared publicly to the rulers of the Jews after his resurrection; that in doing otherwise, he acted like an ambassador pretending authority from his prince, but refusing to show his letters of credence.

I was afraid, when I suffered myself to be drawn into this argument, that I should be led into matters fitter to be decided by men of another profession than by lawyers. But since there is no help now, I will lay before you what appears to me to be the natural and plain account of this matter; leaving it to others, who are better qualified, to give a fuller answer to the objection.

It appears to me, by the accounts we have of Jesus, that he had two distinct offices: one, as the Messias particularly promised to the Jews; another, as he was to be the great high priest of the world. With respect to the first office, he is called the Apostle of the Hebrews;* the Minister of the Circumcision;† and says himself, 'I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.‡ Accordingly when he sent out his Apostles in his lifetime to preach, he expressly forbids them to go to the Gentiles or Samaritans; 'but go,' says he,

* Heb. iii. 1. † Rom. xv. 8. ‡ Matth. xv. 24.

'to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'* Christ continued in the discharge of this office during the time of his natural life, till he was finally rejected by the Jews. And it is observable that the last time he spoke to the people, according to St. Matthew's account, he solemnly took leave of them, and closed his commission. He had been long among them publishing glad tidings; but when all his preaching, all his miracles had proved to be in vain, the last thing he did was to denounce the woes they had brought on themselves. The twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew recites these woes; and at the end of them Christ takes this passionate leave of Jerusalem: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' It is remarkable that this passage, as recorded by St. Matthew and St. Luke twice over, is determined by the circumstances, to refer to the near approach of his own death, and the extreme hatred of the Jews to him; and therefore those words, 'ye shall not see me henceforth,' are to be dated from the time of his death, and manifestly point out the end of his particular mission to them. From the making this declaration as it stands in St. Matthew, his discourses are to his disciples, and they chiefly relate to the miserable and wretched condition of the Jews, which was now decreed and soon to be accomplished. Let me now ask whether in this state of things any farther credentials of Christ's commission to the Jews could be demanded or expected. He was rejected, his commission was determined, and with it the fate of the nation was determined also: what use then of more credentials? As to appearing to them after his resurrection, he could not do it consistently with his own prediction; 'ye shall see me no more, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' The Jews were not in this disposition after the resurrection, nor are they in it yet.

* Matth. x. 5. 6.

The resurrection was the foundation of Christ's new commission, which extended to all the world. Then it was he declared that 'all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth.' Then he gave a new commission to his disciples, not restrained to the house of Israel, but to go and teach all nations. This prerogative the Jews had under this commission, that the gospel was every where first offered to them, but in no other terms than it was offered to the rest of the world. Since then this commission, of which the resurrection was the foundation, extended to all the world alike; what ground is there to demand special and particular evidence to the Jews? The emperor and the senate of Rome were a much more considerable part of the world than the chief priests and the synagogue; why does not the gentleman object then that Christ did not show himself to Tiberius and his senate? And since all men have an equal right in this case, why may not the same demand be made for every country; nay, for every age? And then the gentleman may bring the question nearer home, and ask why Christ did not appear in England in King George's reign? There is, to my apprehension, nothing more unreasonable than to neglect and despise plain and sufficient evidence before us, and to sit down to imagine what kind of evidence would have pleased us, and then to make the want of such evidence an objection to the truth; which yet, if well considered, would be found to be well established.

The observation I have made on the resurrection of Christ naturally leads to another, which will help to account for the nature of the evidence we have in this great point. As the resurrection was the opening a new commission, in which all the world had an interest, so the concern naturally was to have a proper evidence to establish this truth, and which should be of equal weight to all. This did not depend on the satisfaction given to private persons whether they were magistrates or not magistrates, but on the conviction of those whose office it was to be to bear testimony to this truth in the world. In this sense the Apostles were chosen to be witnesses of the resurrection, because they were chosen to bear testimony to it in the world; and not because they only were admitted to see Christ after his resurrection; for the fact is otherwise. The gospel

indeed, concerned to show the evidence on which the faith of the world was to rest, is very particular in setting forth the ocular demonstration which the Apostles had of the resurrection, and mentions others who saw Christ after his resurrection, only accidentally, and as the thread of the history led to it. But yet it is certain there were many others who had this satisfaction as well as the Apostles. St. Luke tells us that when Christ appeared to the eleven Apostles, there were others with them;* who they were, or how many they were, he says not. But it appears in the Acts when an Apostle was to be chosen in the room of Judas, and the chief qualification required was that he should be one capable of being a witness of the resurrection, that there were present a hundred and twenty so qualified.† And St. Paul says that Christ after his rising was seen by five hundred at once, many of whom were living when he appealed to their evidence. So that the gentleman is mistaken when he imagines that a few only were chosen to see Christ after he came from the grave. The truth of the case is, that out of those who saw him some were chosen to bear testimony to the world, and for that reason had the fullest demonstration of the truth, that they might be the better able to give satisfaction to others. And what was there in this conduct to complain of? What to raise any jealousy or suspicion?

As to the witnesses themselves, the first the gentleman takes notice of are the angels and the women. The mention of angels led naturally to apparitions; and the women were called poor silly women; and there is an end of their evidence. But to speak seriously: will the gentleman pretend to prove that there are no intelligent beings between God and man, or that they are not ministers of God, or that they were improperly employed in this great and wonderful work, the resurrection of Christ? Till some of these points are disproved, we may be at rest; for the angels were ministers and not witnesses of the resurrection. And it is not on the credit of the poor silly women that we believe angels were concerned, but on the report of those who wrote the gospels, who deliver it as a truth

* Luke xxiv. 33.

† Acts i. Compare verses 15. 21. 22. together.

known to themselves, and not merely as a report taken from the women.

But for the women what shall I say? Silly as they were, I hope at least they had eyes and ears, and could tell what they heard and saw. In this case they tell no more; they report that the body was not in the sepulchre; but so far from reporting the resurrection, that they did not believe it, and were very anxious to find to what place the body was removed. Farther they were not employed; for I think the gentleman in another part observes rightly, that they were not sent to bear testimony to any people. But suppose them to be witnesses; suppose them to be improper ones; yet the evidence of the men surely is not the worse because some women happened to see the same thing which they saw. And if men only must be admitted, of them we have enough to establish this truth.

I will not spend your time in enumerating these witnesses, or in setting forth the demonstration they had of the truth which they report. These things are well known. If you question their sincerity, they lived miserably and died miserably, for the sake of this truth. And what greater evidence of sincerity can man give or require? And what is still more, they were not deceived in their expectation by being ill treated; for he who employed them told them beforehand that the world would hate them, and treat them with contempt and cruelty.

But leaving these weighty and well-known circumstances to your own reflexion, I beg leave to lay before you another evidence, passed over in silence by the gentleman on the other side. He took notice that a resurrection was so extraordinary a thing that no human evidence could support it. I am not sure that he is not in the right. If twenty men were to come into England with such a report from a distant country, perhaps they might not find twenty more here to believe their story. And I rather think the gentleman may be in the right, because in the present case I see clearly that the credit of the resurrection of Christ was not trusted to mere human evidence. To what evidence it was trusted we find by his own declaration: 'The Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also (speaking to his Apostles) shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the be-

ginning.'* And therefore though the Apostles had conversed with him forty days after his resurrection, and had received his commission to go teach all nations, yet he expressly forbids them entering on the work till they should receive powers from above.† And St. Peter explains the evidence of the resurrection in this manner: 'We (the Apostles) are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them who obey him.'‡

Now what were the powers received by the Apostles? Were they not the powers of wisdom and courage, by which they were enabled to appear before rulers and princes in the name of Christ: the power of miracles, even of raising the dead to life, by which they convinced the world that God was with them in what they said and did? With respect to this evidence St. John says, 'If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.'§ Add to this, that the Apostles had a power to communicate these gifts to believers. Can you wonder that men believed the reality of those powers of which they were partakers, and became conscious to themselves? With respect to these communicated powers I suppose St. John speaks, when he says. 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.‖ Appealing not to an inward testimony of the Spirit in the sense of some modern enthusiasts, but to the powers of the Spirit which believers received, and which were seen in the effects that followed.

It was objected that the Apostles separated themselves to the work of the ministry, and one went into one country, another to another; and consequently, that the belief of the resurrection was originally received every where on the testimony of one witness. I will not examine this fact: suppose it to be so. But did this one witness go alone, when he was attended with the powers of heaven? Was not every blind man restored to sight, and every lame man to his feet, a new witness to the truth reported by the first? Besides, when the people of different countries came to compare notes, and found that they had all received the same account of Christ, and of his doc-

* John xv. 26. 27. † Acts. i. 14. ‡ Acts v. 32.
§ 1 John v. 9. ‖ Ibid. 10.

trine; then surely the evidence of these distant witnesses thus united became stronger than if they had told their story together; for twelve men separately examined, form a much stronger proof for the truth of any fact, than twelve men agreeing together in one story.

If the same thing were to happen in our own time; if one or two were to come into England, and report that a man was raised from the dead, and in consequence of it teach nothing but that we ought to love God and our neighbors; if to confirm their report, they should before our eyes cure the blind, the deaf, the lame, and even raise the dead to life; if endowed with all these powers, they should live in poverty and distress, and patiently submit to all that scorn, contempt, and malice could contrive to distress them, and at last sacrifice even their lives in justification of the truth of their report; if on inquiry we should find that all the countries in Europe had received the same account, supported by the same miraculous powers, attested in like manner by the sufferiugs, and confirmed by the blood of the witnesses;—I would fain know what any reasonable man would do in this case? Would he despise such evidence? I think he would not; and whoever thinks otherwise must say that a resurrection, though in its own nature possible, is yet such a thing in which we ought not to believe either God or man.

Judge.—Have you done, Sir?

Mr. B.—Yes, my lord.

Judge.—Go on, Mr. A., if you have any thing to say in reply.

Mr. A.—My lord, I shall trouble you with very little. The objections and answers under this head I shall leave to the judgment of the court, and beg leave only to make an observation or two on the last part of the gentleman's argument.

And, first, with respect to the sufferings of the Apostles and disciples of Jesus, and the argument drawn from thence for the truth of their doctrines and assertions, I beg leave to observe to you that there is not a false religion or pretence in the world but can produce the same authority, and show many instances of men who have suffered even to death for the truth of their several professions. If we consult only modern story,

we shall find papists suffering for popery, protestants for their religion; and among protestants, every sect has had its martyrs, puritans, quakers, fifth-monarchy men. In Henry VIIIth's time, England saw both popish and protestant martyrs; in Queen Mary's reign the rage fell on protestants; in Queen Elizabeth's papists and puritans were called sometimes, though rarely, to this trial. In later times, sometimes churchmen, sometimes dissenters, were persecuted. What must we say then? All these sufferers had not truth with them; and yet, if there be any weight in this argument from suffering, they have all a right to plead it.

But I may be told, perhaps, that men by their sufferings, though they do not prove their doctrines to be true, yet prove at least their own sincerity; as if it were a thing impossible for men to dissemble at the point of death! Alas, how many instances are there of men's denying facts plainly proved, asserting facts plainly disproved, even with the rope about their necks! Must all such pass for innocent sufferers, sincere men? If not, it must be allowed that a man's word at the point of death is not always to be relied on.

Another observation I would make is with respect to the evidence of the Spirit, on which so much stress is laid. It has been hitherto insisted on that the resurrection was a matter of fact, and such a fact as was capable and proper to be supported by the evidence of sense. How comes it about that this evidence, this which is the proper evidence, is given up as insufficient, and a new improper evidence introduced? Is it not surprising that one great miracle should want a hundred more to prove it? Every miracle is itself an appeal to sense, and therefore admits no evidence but that of sense; and there is no connection between a miracle done this year and last year. It does not follow therefore, because Peter cured a lame man, (allowing the fact,) that therefore Christ rose from the dead.

But allowing the gentleman all he demands, what is it to us? They who had the witness within them, did perhaps very well to consult him and to take his word; but how am I, or others, who have not this witness in us, the better for it? If

the first ages of the church saw all the wonders related by the gentleman, and believed, it shows at least, in his opinion, that this strong evidence was necessary to create the belief he requires; why then does he require this belief of us who have not this strong evidence?

Judge.—Very well. Gentlemen of the jury, you have heard the proofs and arguments on both sides, and it is now your part to give a verdict.

Here the gentlemen whispered together, and the foreman stood up.

Foreman.—My lord, the cause has been long, and consists of several articles, therefore the jury hope you will give them your directions.

Judge.—No, no; you are very able to judge without my help.

Mr. A.—My lord, pray consider, you appointed this meeting, and chose your office. Mr. B. and I have gone through our parts, and have some right to insist on your doing your part.

Mr. B.—I must join, Sir, in that request.

Judge.—I have often heard that all honor has a burden attending it; but I did not suspect it in this office, which I conferred on myself. But since it must be so, I will recollect, and lay before you as well as I can, the substance of the debate.

Gentlemen of the jury, the question before you is, whether the witnesses of the resurrection of Christ are guilty of giving false evidence or no.

Two sorts of objections or accusations are brought against them. One charges fraud and deceit on the transaction itself; the other charges the evidence as forged, and insufficient to support the credit of so extraordinary an event.

There are also three periods of time to be considered.

The first takes in the ministry of Christ, and ends at his death. During this period the fraud is supposed to be contrived.

The second reaches from his death to his resurrection. During this period the fraud is supposed to be executed.

The third begins from the resurrection, and takes in the

whole ministry of the Apostles. And here the evidence they gave the world for this fact is the main consideration.

As to the first period of time, and the fraud charged on Jesus, I must observe to you that this charge had no evidence to support it; all the facts reported of Jesus stand in full contradiction to it. To suppose, as the council did, that this fraud might possibly appear if we had any Jewish books written at the time, is not to bring proof, but to wish for proof; for as it was rightly observed on the other side, how does Mr. A. know there were any such books? And since they are lost, how does he know what was in them? Were such books extant, they might probably prove beyond dispute the facts recorded in the gospels.

You were told that the Jews were a very superstitious people, much addicted to prophecy, and particularly that they had a strong expectation about the time that Christ appeared, to have a victorious prince rise among them. This is laid as the ground of suspicion; and in fact many impostors, you are told, set up on these notions of the people; and thence it is inferred that Christ built his scheme on the strength of these popular prejudices. But when this fact came to be examined on the other side, it appeared that Christ was so far from falling in with these notions, and abusing the credulity of the people, that it was his main point to correct these prejudices, to oppose these superstitions; and by these very means he fell into disgrace with his countrymen, and suffered as one who, in their opinion, destroyed the law and the prophets. With respect to temporal power, so far was he from aiming at it, that he refused it when offered; so far from giving any hopes of it to his disciples, that he invited men on quite different terms, 'to take up the cross, and follow him.' And it is observable that after he had foretold his death and resurrection, he continued to admonish his disciples of the evils they were to suffer; to tell them that the world would hate them and abuse them; which surely to common sense has no appearance that he was then contriving a cheat, or encouraging his disciples to execute it.

But as ill supported as this charge is, there was no avoiding it; it was necessity, and not choice, which drove the gentleman

to it; for since Christ had foretold his resurrection, if the whole was a cheat, he certainly was conscious to it, and consequently the plot was laid in his own time. And yet the supposing Christ conscious to such a fraud in these circumstances is contrary to all probability. It is very improbable that he or any man should, without any temptation, contrive a cheat to take place after his death. And if this could be supposed, it is highly improbable that he should give public notice of it, and thereby put all men on their guard; especially considering there were only a few women, and twelve men of low fortunes and mean education, to conduct the plot; and the whole power of the Jews and Romans to oppose it.

Mr. A. seemed sensible of these difficulties, and therefore would have varied the charge, and have made Christ an enthusiast, and his disciples only cheats. This was not properly moved, and therefore not debated; for which reason I shall pass it over with this short observation; that enthusiasm is as contrary to the whole character and conduct of Christ as even fraud is. Besides, this imagination, if allowed, goes only to Christ's own part, and leaves the charge of fraud in its full extent on the management from the time of his death, and therefore is of no use, unless the fraud afterwards be apparent. For if there really was a resurrection, it will sufficiently answer the charge of enthusiasm.

I pass on then to the second period, to consider what happened between the death and resurrection of Christ. And here it is agreed that Christ died and was buried. So far then there was no fraud.

For the better understanding the charge here, we must recollect a material circumstance reported by one of the evangelists, which is this: after Christ was buried, the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate the Roman governor, and informed him that this deceiver (meaning Jesus) had in his lifetime foretold that he would rise again after three days; that they suspected his disciples would steal away the body, and pretend a resurrection; and then the 'last error would be worse than the first.' They therefore desire a guard to watch the sepulchre, to prevent all fraud. They had one granted; accord-

ingly they placed a watch on the sepulchre, and scaled up the stone at the mouth of it.

What the event of this case was the same writer tells us. The guards saw the stone removed by angels, and for fear they became as dead men. When they came to the city, they reported to the chief priests what had happened. A council is called, and a resolution taken to bribe the soldiers to say that the body was stolen while they were asleep; and the council undertook to excuse the soldiers to Pilate, for their negligence in falling asleep when they were on duty.

Thus the fact stands in the original record. Now the council for Woolston maintains that the story reported by the soldiers, after they had been bribed by the chief priests, contains the true account of this pretended resurrection.

The gentleman was sensible of a difficulty in his way, to account for the credit which the Jews gave to the prediction of Christ; for if, as he pretends, they knew him to be an impostor, what reason had they to take any notice of his prediction? And therefore that very caution in this case betrayed their concern, and showed that they were not satisfied that his pretensions were groundless. To obviate this, he says that they had discovered before one great cheat in the case of Lazarus, and therefore were suspicious of another in this case. He was answered that the discovery of a cheat in the case before mentioned ought rather to have set them at ease, and made them quite secure as to the event of the prediction. In reply he says that the chief priests, however satisfied of the cheat themselves, had found that it prevailed among the people; and to secure the people from being farther imposed on, they used the caution they did.

This is the substance of the argument on both sides.

I must observe to you that this reasoning from the case of Lazarus has no foundation in history; there is no pretence for saying that the Jews in this whole affair had any particular regard to the raising of Lazarus; and if they had any such just suspicion, why was it not mentioned at the trial of Christ? There was an opportunity of opening the whole fraud, and undeceiving the people. The Jews had a plain law for punishing a false prophet; and what could be a stronger conviction

than such a cheat made manifest? Why then was this advantage lost?

The gentleman builds this observation on these words: 'so the last error shall be worse than the first.' But is there here any thing said about Lazarus? No; the words are a proverbial form of speech, and probably were used without relation to any particular case. But if a particular meaning must be assigned, it is more probable that the words being used to Pilate contained a reason applicable to him. Now Pilate had been drawn in to consent to the crucifixion for fear the Jews should set up Jesus to be their king in opposition to Cæsar; therefore say the chief priests to him, if once the people believe him to be risen from the dead, the last error will be worse than the first; that is, they will be more inclined and encouraged to rebel against the Romans than ever. This is a natural sense of the words, as they are used to move the Roman governor to allow them a guard. Whether Lazarus were dead or alive, whether Christ came to destroy the law and the prophets, or to establish or confirm them, was of little moment to Pilate. It is plain he was touched by none of these considerations, and refused to be concerned in the affair of Christ, till he was alarmed with the suggestions of danger to the Roman state. This was the first fear that moved him; must not therefore the second now suggested to him be of the same kind?

The next circumstance to be considered is that of the seal on the stone of the sepulchre. The council for Woolston supposes an agreement between the Jews and disciples about setting this seal. But for this agreement there is no evidence; nay, to suppose it, contradicts the whole series of the history, as the gentleman on the other side observed. I will not enter into the particulars of this debate, for it is needless. The plain natural account given of this matter shuts out all other suppositions. Mr. B. observed to you that the Jews having a guard, set the seal to prevent any combination among the guards to deceive them; which seems a plain and satisfactory account. The council for W. replies, let the use of the seals be what they will, it is plain they were broken; and if they were used as a check on the Roman soldiers, then probably

they consented to the fraud; and then it is easily understood how the body was removed.

I must observe to you here that this suspicion agrees neither with the account given by the evangelist, nor with the story set about by the Jews; so that it is utterly unsupported by any evidence.

Nor has it any probability in it. For what could move Pilate and the Roman soldiers to propagate such a cheat? He had crucified Christ for no other reason but for fear the people should revolt from the Romans; perhaps too he consented to place a guard on the sepulchre, to put an end to the people's hope in Jesus; and is it likely at last that he was consenting to a cheat, to make the people believe him risen from the dead? The thing of all others, which he was obliged, as his apprehensions were, to prevent.

The next circumstance insisted on as a proof of the fraud is, that Jesus rose before the time he had appointed. Mr. A. supposes that the disciples hastened the plot, for fear of falling in with multitudes, who waited only for the appointed time to be at the sepulchre, and to see with their own eyes. He was answered that the disciples were not, could not be concerned, or be present at moving the body; that they were dispersed, and lay concealed for fear of the Jews; that hastening the plot was of no use, for the resurrection happened whilst the guards were at the sepulchre, who were probably enough to prevent violence; certainly enough to discover it, if any were used.

This difficulty then rests merely on the reckoning of the time. Christ died on Friday, rose early on Sunday. The question is whether this was rising the third day according to the prediction? I will refer the authorities made use of in this case to your memory, and add only one observation to show that it was indeed the third day according as the people of the country reckoned. When Christ talked with the two disciples who knew him not, they gave him an account of his own crucifixion, and their disappointment, and tell him, 'To-day is the third day since these things were done.'* Now this conversation was on the very day of the resurrection. And the disci-

* Luke xxiv. 21.

ples thought of nothing less than answering an objection against the resurrection, which as yet they did not believe. They recount only a matter of fact, and reckon the time according to the usage of their country, and call the day of the resurrection the third day from the crucifixion; which is a plain evidence in what manner the Jews reckoned in this and like cases.

As the objections in this case are founded on the story reported by the Jews and the Roman soldiers, Mr. B. in his answer endeavored to show from some historical passages that the Jews themselves did not believe the story.

His first argument was, that the Jews never questioned the disciples for this cheat, and the share they had in it when they had them in their power. And yet who sees not that it was very much to their purpose so to do? To this there is no reply.

The second argument was from the treatment St. Paul had from King Agrippa, and his saying to St. Paul, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian:' a speech which he reckons could not be made by a prince, to one concerned in carrying on a known cheat. To this the gentleman replies that Agrippa never did become a Christian, and that no great stress is to be laid on his complaisance to his prisoner. But allowing that there was something of humanity and civility in the expression, yet such civility could hardly be paid to a known impostor. There is a propriety even in civility; a prince may be civil to a rebel, but he will hardly compliment him for his loyalty; he may be civil to a poor sectary, but if he knows him to be a cheat, he will scarcely compliment him with hopes that he will be of his party.

The third argument was from the advice given by Gamaliel to the council of the Jews, to let the Apostles alone, 'for fear they themselves should be found to fight against God.' A supposition which the gentleman thinks absolutely inconsistent with his or the council's being persuaded that the Apostles were guilty of any fraud in managing the resurrection of Christ.

The gentleman replies that Gamaliel's advice respected only the numbers of people deceived, and was a declaration of his opinion that it was not prudent to come to extremities

till the people were in a better temper. This deserves consideration.

First, I observe that Gamaliel's words are express, 'lest ye be found to fight against God,' which reason respects God, and not the people. And the supposition is that 'the hand of God' might possibly be in this work; a saying which could not have come from him, or have been received by the council, if they had believed the resurrection to have been a cheat.

Secondly, it is remarkable that the miracles wrought by the Apostles after the death of Christ, those especially which occasioned the calling this council, had a much greater effect on the Jews than even the miracles of Christ himself. They held out against all the wonders of Christ, and were perpetually plotting his death, not doubting but that would put an end to their trouble: but when after his death they saw the same powers continue with the Apostles, they saw no end of the affair, but began to think in earnest there might be more in it than they were willing to believe. And on the report made to them of the Apostle's works, they make serious reflexion, 'and doubted whereunto this would grow.' And though in their anger and vexation of heart they thought of desperate remedies, and were for killing the Apostles also, yet they hearkened willingly to Gamaliel's advice, which at another time might have been dangerous to the adviser. So that it appears from the history that the whole council had the same doubt that Gamaliel had, that possibly the hand of God might be in this thing. And could the Jews, if they had manifestly discovered the cheat of the resurrection a little time before, have entertained such a suspicion?

The last period commences at the resurrection, and takes in the evidence on which the credit of this fact stands.

The council for Woolston, among other difficulties, started one which, if well grounded, excludes all evidence out of this case. The resurrection being a thing out of the course of nature, he thinks the testimony of nature, held forth to us in her constant method of working, a stronger evidence against the possibility of a resurrection than any human evidence can be for the reality of one.

In answer to this, it is said on the other side,

First, that a resurrection is a thing to be judged of by men's senses; and this cannot be doubted. We all know when a man is dead; and should he come to life again, we might judge whether he was alive or no by the very same means by which we judge those about us to be living men.

Secondly, that the notion of a resurrection contradicts no one principle of right reason, interferes with no law of nature; and that whoever admits that God gave man life at first, cannot possibly doubt of his power to restore it when lost.

Thirdly, that appealing to the settled course of nature is referring the matter in dispute, not to rules or maxims of reason and true philosophy, but to the prejudices and mistakes of men, which are various and infinite, and differ sometimes according to the climate men live in, because men form a notion of nature from what they see; and therefore in cold countries all men judge it to be according to the course of nature for water to freeze, in warm countries they judge it to be unnatural. Consequently, that it is not enough to prove any thing to be contrary to the laws of nature, to say that it is usually or constantly to our observation otherwise; and therefore, though men in the ordinary course die, and do not rise again, (which is certainly a prejudice against the belief of a resurrection,) yet is it not an argument against the possibility of a resurrection.

Another objection was against the reality of the body of Christ after it came from the grave. These objections are founded on such passages as report his appearing or disappearing to the eyes of his disciples at pleasure; his coming in among them when the doors were shut; his forbidding some to touch him, his inviting others to do it; his having the very wounds whereof he died, fresh and open in his body, and the like. Hence the council concluded that it was no real body, which was sometimes visible, sometimes invisible; sometimes capable of being touched, sometimes incapable.

On the other side, it was answered that many of these objections are founded on a mistaken sense of the passages referred to; particularly of the passage in which Christ is thought to forbid Mary Magdalen to touch him; of another, in which he calls to Thomas to examine his wounds; and probably of a

third, relating to Christ's conversation with his disciples on the road, without being known by them.

As to other passages, which relate his appearing and disappearing, and coming in when the doors were shut, it is said that no conclusion can be drawn from them against the reality of Christ's body; that these things might happen many ways, and yet the body be real, which is the only point to which the present objection extends; that there might be in this, and probably was, something miraculous; but nothing more wonderful than what happened on another occasion in his lifetime; where the gentleman who makes the objection allows him to have had a real body.

I mention these things but briefly, just to bring the course of the argument to your remembrance.

The next objection is taken from hence, that Christ did not appear publicly to the people, and particularly to the chief priests and rulers of the Jews. It is said that his commission related to them in an especial manner, and that it appears strange that the main proof of his mission, the resurrection, should not be laid before them; but that witnesses should be picked and culled to see this mighty wonder. This is the force of the objection.

To which it is answered, first, that the particular commission to the Jews expired at the death of Christ, and therefore the Jews had, on this account, no claim for any particular evidence. And it is insisted that Christ, before his death, declared the Jews should not see him till they were better disposed to receive him.

Secondly, that as the whole world had a concern in the resurrection of Christ, it was necessary to prepare a proper evidence for the whole world; which was not to be done by any particular satisfaction given to the people of the Jews or their rulers.

Thirdly, that as to the chosen witnesses, it is a mistake to think that they were chosen as the only persons to see Christ after the resurrection, and that in truth many others did see him; but that the witnesses were chosen as proper persons to bear testimony to all people; an office to which many others who did see Christ were not particularly commissioned. That

making choice of proper and credible witnesses was so far from being a ground of just suspicion, that it is in all cases the most proper way to exclude suspicion.

The next objection is pointed against the evidence of the angels and the women. It is said that history reports that the women saw young men at the sepulchre; that they were advanced into angels merely through the fear and superstition of the women; that at the best this is but a story of an apparition; a thing in times of ignorance much talked of, but in the days of knowlege never heard of.

In answer to this, it is said that the angels are not properly reckoned among the witnesses of the resurrection; they were not in the number of the chosen witnesses, or sent to bear testimony in the world; that they were indeed ministers of God appointed to attend the resurrection: that God has such ministers, cannot be reasonably doubted; nor can it be objected that they were improperly employed, or below their dignity, in attending on the resurrection of Christ: that we believe them to be angels, not on the report of the women, but on the credit of the evangelist who affirms it. That what is said of apparitions on this occasion, may pass for wit and ridicule, but yields no reason or argument.

The objection to the women was, I think, only that they were women; which was strengthened by calling them silly women.

It was answered that women have eyes and ears as well as men, and can tell what they see and hear. And it happened in this case that the women were so far from being credulous, that they believed not the angels, and hardly believed their own report. However, that the women are none of the chosen witnesses; and if they were, the evidence of the men cannot be set aside, because women saw what they saw.

This is the substance of the objections and answers.

The council for the Apostles insisted farther, that they gave the greatest assurance to the world that possibly could be given, of their sincere dealing, by suffering all kinds of hardship, and at last death itself, in confirmation of the truth of their evidence.

The council for Woolston, in reply to this, told you that all

religions, whether true or false, have had their martyrs; that no opinion, however absurd, can be named, but some have been content to die for it; and then concluded that suffering is no evidence of the truth of the opinions for which men suffer.

To clear this matter to you, I must observe how this case stands. You have heard often, in the course of this argument, that the Apostles were witnesses chosen to bear testimony to the resurrection, and for that reason had the fullest evidence themselves of the truth of it; not merely by seeing Christ once or twice after his death, but by frequent conversations with him for forty days together before his ascension. That this was their proper business appears plainly from history, where we find that to ordain an apostle was the same thing as ordaining one to be a witness of the resurrection.* If you look farther to the preaching of the Apostles, you will find this was the great article insisted on.† And St. Paul knew the weight of this article, and the necessity of teaching it, when he said, 'if Christ be not risen, our faith is vain.' You see then that the thing which the Apostles testified, and the thing for which they suffered, was the truth of the resurrection, which is a mere matter of fact.

Consider now how the objection stands. The council for Woolston tells you that it is common for men to die for false opinions; and he tells you nothing but the truth. But even in those cases their suffering is an evidence of their sincerity; and it would be very hard to charge men who die for the doctrine they profess, with insincerity in the profession. Mistaken they may be; but every mistaken man is not a cheat. Now if you will allow the suffering of the Apostles to prove their sincerity, which you cannot well disallow, and consider that they died for the truth of a matter of fact which they had seen themselves, you will perceive how strong the evidence is in this case. In doctrines and matters of opinion men mistake perpetually; and it is no reason for me to take up with another man's opinion because I am persuaded he is sincere in it. But when a man reports to me an uncommon fact, yet such a one as in its own nature is a plain object of sense, if I believe him not, it is not

* Acts i. 22. † Acts ii. 2. 22. &c. iii. 15. iv. 10. v. 30.

because I suspect his eyes, or his sense of feeling, but merely because I suspect his sincerity. For if I was to see the same thing myself, I should believe myself; and therefore my suspicion does not arise from the inability of human senses to judge in the case, but from a doubt of the sincerity of the reporter. In such cases therefore there wants nothing to be proved, but only the sincerity of the reporter; and since voluntary suffering for the truth is at least a proof of sincerity, the sufferings of the Apostles for the truth of the resurrection is a full and unexceptionable proof.

The council for Woolston was sensible of this difference, and therefore he added that there are many instances of men's suffering and dying in an obstinate denial of the truth of facts plainly proved. This observation is also true. I remember a story of a man who endured with great constancy all the tortures of the rack, denying the fact with which he was charged. When he was asked afterwards how he could hold out against all the tortures, he answered, I had painted a gallows on the toe of my shoe, and when the rack stretched me, I looked on the gallows, and bore the pain to save my life. This man denied a plain fact under great torture, but you see a reason for it. In other cases, when criminals persist in denying their crimes, they often do it, and there is reason to suspect they do it always, in hopes of a pardon or reprieve. But what are these instances to the present purpose? All these men suffer against their will, and for their crimes; and their obstinacy is built on the hope of escaping, by moving the compassion of the government. Can the gentleman give any instances of persons who died willingly in attestation of a false fact? We have had in England some weak enough to die for the pope's supremacy; but do you think a man could be found to die in proof of the pope's being actually on the throne of England.

Now the Apostles died in asserting the truth of Christ's resurrection. It was always in their power to quit their evidence and save their lives. Even their bitterest enemies, the Jews, required no more of them than to be silent.* Others

* Acts iv. 17. v. 28

have denied facts, or asserted facts, in hopes of saving their lives when they were under sentence of death. But these men attested a fact at the expense of their lives, which they might have saved by denying the truth. So that between criminals dying and denying plain facts, and the Apostles dying for their testimony, there is this material difference: criminals deny the truth in hopes of saving their lives; the Apostles willingly parted with their lives rather than deny the truth.

We are come now to the last, and indeed the most weighty consideration.

The council for the Apostles having in the course of the argument allowed that more evidence is required to support the credit of the resurrection, it being a very extraordinary event, than is necessary in common cases; in the latter part of his defence sets forth the extraordinary evidence on which this fact stands. This is the evidence of the Spirit; the Spirit of wisdom and power which was given to the Apostles to enable them to confirm their testimony by signs and wonders, and mighty works. This part of the argument was well urged by the gentleman, and I need not repeat all he said.

The council for Woolston in his reply made two objections to this evidence.

The first was this; that the resurrection having all along been pleaded to be a matter of fact and an object of sense, to recur to miracles for the proof of it is to take it out of its proper evidence, the evidence of sense, and to rest it on a proof which cannot be applied to it; for seeing one miracle, he says, is no evidence that another miracle was wrought before it; as healing a sick man is no evidence that a dead man was raised to life.

To clear this difficulty you must consider by what train of reasoning miracles come to be proofs in any case. A miracle of itself proves nothing, unless this only, that there is a cause equal to the producing the effect we see. Suppose you should see a man raise one from the dead, and he should go away and say nothing to you, you would not find that any fact or any proposition was proved or disproved by this miracle. But should he declare to you in the name of him by whose power the miracle was wrought, that image-worship was unlawful, you

would then be possessed of a proof against image-worship. But how? Not because the miracle proves any thing as to the point itself; but because the man's declaration is authorised by him who wrought the miracle in confirmation of his doctrine. And therefore miracles are directly a proof of the authority of persons, and not of the truth of things.

To apply this to the present case: if the Apostles had wrought miracles, and said nothing of the resurrection, the miracles would have proved nothing about the resurrection one way or other. But when as eye-witnesses they attested the truth of the resurrection, and wrought miracles to confirm their authority, the miracles did not directly prove the resurrection, but they confirmed and established beyond all suspicion the proper evidence, the evidence of eye-witnesses. So that here is no change of the evidence from proper to improper; the fact still rests on the evidence of sense, confirmed and strengthened by the authority of the Spirit. If a witness calls in his neighbors to attest his veracity, they prove nothing as to the fact in question, but only confirm the evidence of the witness. The case here is the same; though between the authorities brought in confirmation of the evidence there is no comparison.

The second objection was, that this evidence, however good it may be in its kind, is yet nothing to us. It is well, the gentleman says, for those who had it; but what is that to us who have it not?

To adjust this difficulty, I must observe to you that the evidence now under consideration was not a private evidence of the Spirit, or any inward light, like to that which the quakers in our time pretend to, but an evidence appearing in the manifest and visible works of the Spirit; and this evidence was capable of being transmitted, and actually has been transmitted to us on unquestionable authority: and to allow the evidence to have been good in the first ages and not in this, seems to me to be a contradiction to the rules of reasoning. For if we see enough to judge that the first ages had reason to believe, we must needs see at the same time that it is reasonable for us also to believe. As the present question only relates to the nature of the evidence, it was not necessary to produce from history the instances to show in how plentiful a manner this evidence

was granted to the church. Whoever wants this satisfaction may easily have it.

Gentlemen of the jury, I have laid before you the substance of what has been said on both sides. You are now to consider of it, and to give your verdict.

The jury consulted together, and the foreman rose up.

Foreman.—My lord, we are ready to give our verdict.

Judge.—Are you all agreed ?

Jury.—Yes.

Judge.—Who shall speak for you ?

Jury.—Our foreman.

Judge.—What say you ? Are the Apostles guilty of giving false evidence in the case of the resurrection of Jesus, or not guilty ?

Foreman.—Not guilty.

Judge.—Very well ; and now, Gentlemen, I resign my commission, and am your humble servant.

The company rose up and were beginning to pay their compliments to the judge and the council, but were interrupted by a gentleman who went up to the judge and offered him a fee. What is this ? says the judge. A fee, Sir, said the gentleman. A fee to a judge is a bribe, said the judge. True, Sir, said the gentleman ; but you have resigned your commission, and will not be the first judge who has come from the bench to the bar without any diminution of honor. Now Lazarus's case is to come on next, and this fee is to retain you on his side. There followed a confused noise of all speaking together to persuade the judge to take the fee ; but as the trial had lasted longer than I expected, and I had lapsed the time of an appointment for business, I was forced to slip away ; and whether the judge was prevailed on to undertake the cause of Lazarus or no, I cannot say.

*** N. B. Not only Mr. Woolston's objections in his Sixth Discourse, but those also which he and others have published in other books, are here considered.

SUMMARY.

SECTION I.

THE manner in which the Considerer introduces himself and his book into the world described. His frank declaration of his principles in respect to religion commended; yet after this, it is matter of surprise that such a person should set himself up for a fair examiner of the evidence of the resurrection. His blasphemous language quoted; his qualifications to write an answer to the Trial of the Witnesses examined in several instances; from whence it appears that there is little reason to expect from him a judicious or fair appeal. His perversion, alteration, and misapplication of passages taken from the Trial stated. His abuse of the writers of the New Testament. His attempts at forgery in their names.

SECTION II.

Before the main points are considered, a remark of the Considerer is noticed, relating to the credit of revelation in general. The first point that more directly affects the credit of the resurrection, is the nature and quality of the evidence. The Considerer complains that all the evidence lies on the side of the resurrection; imagines that there was anciently a great stock of evidence against the truth of it, but that it has unhappily been lost or destroyed: this and similar complaints answered. Another question taken up by the Considerer, is about the nature of Christ's kingdom. This, although it very little concerns the resurrection, is examined at considerable length.

The next question started is, whether Christ predicted his own death and resurrection; which the Considerer is willing to think he did not, because the author of the Trial asserts that he did. This point examined: first, with regard to the Considerer's assertion that the chief priests and rulers never heard of any such predictions, and his inference from thence: secondly, with regard to his admission, that such predictions appear five times in the gospel; and his inference that they are forgeries, from their not being understood by the disciples. The only way of accounting for the actions of men is by comparing them with their opinions and persuasions, and the circumstances in which they were at the time, and then considering what men under such circumstances and such persuasions would naturally do. The conduct of the rulers of the Jews, and of the disciples, accounted for in this method. A particular consideration of the prophecy deduced from the sign of Jonas. That part of the gospel-history which contains the sign promised to the Jews, is not admitted by the Considerer as true. His reasons to prove the whole a forgery examined.

SECTION III.

Consideration of the inconsistencies charged on the evangelists in the account they give of the circumstances of the resurrection. Order in which the four gospels appeared. The true way of examining the state of the history is, to consider the accounts given by the three first evangelists separately, and then to compare them with that of St. John. The account of what passed at the sepulchre, as given by the three evangelists, stated. The particulars in which they differ: these compared with St. John's account, and their difference considered after his additions and explications. Having gone through his proofs against the gospel history, the Considerer returns to the Trial of the Witnesses. His objections against

the unexceptionable character of the witnesses answered. Reply to his repetition of the old objection, that Jesus did not show himself to the Jews after his resurrection. Other objections of his stated and answered.

SECTION IV.

The Considerer has one argument still in reserve, which, were it a valid one, would strike at the credit of revelation in general. He thinks that miracles of any kind are impossible, and exclude all evidence, being inconsistent with the reason of man and the nature of things, &c. For the possibility of the resurrection the reader is referred to the Trial of the Witnesses. The reason and possibility of miracles in general is here discussed. Answer to the Considerer's arguments against them, as contrary to experience, reason, and common sense. Answer to his arguments against them, as being impossible in a moral point of view; that is, contrary to the perfection of God's nature, to his unchangeableness, his wisdom, his justice, and his goodness. Conclusion.

THE SEQUEL

OF THE TRIAL OF THE WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION: BEING AN ANSWER TO THE EXCEPTIONS OF A LATE PAMPHLET, INTITLED, 'THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CONSIDERED BY A MORAL PHILOSOPHER.' REVISED BY THE AUTHOR OF THE TRIAL OF THE WITNESSES.

[This tract, though stated only to have been revised by Bishop Sherlock, seems to contain many touches by his masterly hand: at any rate it forms an appropriate and almost necessary accompaniment to the preceding one, and is on that account introduced into this work.—Ed.]

SECTION I.

The Considerer introduces himself and his book to the world in a very extraordinary and pompous manner. The Trial of the Witnesses had, it seems, gone through ten editions unanswered; had (as he most ingeniously expresses himself,) "miraculously supported the miracles of the gospel; had gained an indisputable conquest, and reached the remotest corners of infidelity." What then was to be done in this distress? Why he is called on by his friends to read it, and by his ardent love of truth to answer it; and seems to think that all the hopes of infidelity centre in him.

An author of so much vivacity, and so full of himself, can hardly be expected to keep the dull road of reasoning; his wit will sometimes run away with him. Hence it is that we meet with so much pertness and spirit in his performance; hence proceed those beautiful expressions of 'miraculously supported the miracles,' the 'damnably bad' opinions of somebody or

other; and the witty conceit of introducing ghosts 'in white sheets and dark lanterns' into this serious argument. Of all which, and many others of equal politeness, I take leave once for all, and give them up to be enjoyed by the author and his admirers without disturbance.

But I must needs commend this author for the open and frank declaration of his principles in respect to religion. Some have pretended friendship to the gospel, that they might the more successfully undermine the foundations of it; but this author acts with more bravery and more honesty. He says fairly, "in my opinion great judgment and great faith are such contradictions that they never unite so as to meet in one person." I daresay he did not make this declaration on any suspicion he had of his own judgment. Again, with respect to miracles, he tell us, "every real miracle is an absurdity to common sense and understanding, and contrary to the attributes of God."

After these express declarations, one would wonder how this author could propose himself to the world as a proper person to make a fair examination of the evidence of the resurrection, which is both the greatest miracle and the greatest article of the Christian faith. But he had his view in so doing, and has been so good as to acquaint us what he proposed by his answer to the Trial of the Witnesses; and he shall tell it himself. "My design is to promote that veneration for wisdom and virtue which has been debased and degraded by faith; by a faith which has not sent peace on earth, but a sword. Where this foolish faith bears sway, the tree of knowlege produces damning fruit; but under the benign influence of George our King in this glorious day of light and liberty, this divine hag and her pious witchcrafts, which were brought forth in darkness and nourished by obscurity, faint at the approach of day, and vanish on sight."

The faith which the gospel proposes in Christ Jesus, the ever blessed Son of God, and the only name under heaven by which we may be saved, is here with an astonishing degree of impiety called a divine hag with pious witchcrafts. Unhappy man! what could he mean by this? I pity him from my heart. But what could he mean by abusing the king, unless he had a

mind to show that he is just as good a subject as he is a Christian?

Every serious man will read these passages with abhorrence; and they are a warning to every reader to be on his guard against the representations made of the doctrines of the gospel and the evidences of Christianity by so determined and so inveterate an enemy to both.

But let us examine this author in another respect. So little qualified was he to write an answer to the Trial of the Witnesses, that he did not understand it when he published his answer, but mistook sometimes the objection for the answer to the objection, and sometimes *vice versa;* and ascribed to the author of the Trial the very opinion he was confuting. A few instances will explain my meaning.

The Considerer charges the author of the Trial with founding faith on education, and writing in favor of that opinion. To support this charge he quotes from the Trial the very words that disclaim that opinion. The words are: "What prevailed with those who first received it? (that is, the belief of the resurrection:) they certainly did not follow the examples of their fathers. Here then is the point; how did this fact gain credit in the world at first? Credit it has gained without doubt." It is marvellous how the Considerer could read, could transcribe these words into his book, and not feel that the meaning and intent of them was to lay the force of custom and education quite out of the case, and to bring the question to rest on the original evidence of the resurrection at the first, before custom or education could possibly have any influence. It is hard to account for his mistake, but mistake he does, and goes on for a page or two together with great triumph, reasoning against this phantom of his own raising. "Then," says he, "every story that has gained credit in the world, as this has done, is also true;" and concludes with this wise saying, "believing truth for company's sake is no more meritorious than believing error." But he has been so far ashamed of this blunder as to drop the whole passage and his own reasoning on it in his new edition.

The Considerer says, "it is argued the Apostles were sincere, therefore what they reported was true." He does not indeed

directly charge the author of the Trial with arguing thus; but whomsoever he means to charge, he shows plainly that he never understood the use or force of the argument drawn from the topic of sincerity; which is never applied to prove that the sincere reporter delivers nothing but truth, for he may be and often is imposed on himself; but is used merely to show that he is not a deceiver himself, and acting with a design to impose on others. The Considerer has with great success encountered the mistake, which he imputes to somebody or other; but the only thing he has made clear is, that he did not know what he was writing about. But some kind friend pointed out this mistake, and it disappears on the new edition.

The next instance of this kind with which I shall trouble the reader, will hardly pass for a mistake only. Whatever it is, it has received the approbation of the Considerer's second thoughts, and found a place in his new edition.

The author of the Trial, or the person designed by B in the Trial, repeats an objection, which A, the pleader against the resurrection, had insisted on. "There is," says B, or the author of the Trial, "but one observation more, which the gentleman (that is, A, the objector to the resurrection) made under this head. Jesus, he says, referred to the authority of ancient prophecies to prove that the Messias was to die and rise again. The ancient books referred to are extant, and no such prophecies, he says, are to be found. Now whether the gentleman (that is, the objector) can find those prophecies or no, is not material to the present question."

Is it not manifest to sight that those words, "the ancient books referred to are extant, and no such prophecies to be found," express the sense and opinion of the objector to the resurrection? But the Considerer charges it to the author of the Trial as his own sentiment, which he could not have done had he quoted the passage fairly. For this reason he has altered it, and left out all the words which expressly refer the opinion to the objector. His quotation stands thus: "The author of the Trial (or Mr. B.) says that though Jesus referred to the authority of the ancient prophecies to prove that the Messias was to die and rise again, and that though the ancient books referred to are extant, and no such prophecies to be

found, whether the prophecies can be found or no, it is not material to the present question."

I shall leave the Considerer's fair dealing to be tried on a comparison with the passage as it stands in the Trial, and as it is transcribed into his answer; and let him account to his readers as he can for having so grossly imposed on them.

The only thing here properly to be charged on the author of the Trial is expressed in those words, "whether the gentleman (that is, the objector) can find those prophecies or no, is not material to the present question." I think this is said very justly; for surely believers are not to wait for the evidence of prophecy until infidels can or will see it; and therefore whether the gentleman (the objector) could find the prophecies or no, was not material; and farther, whether he could or not find the prophecies, it was not material to the present question. The present question related to the truth of the resurrection, considered merely as a matter of fact; and as facts must be proved, not by prophecy, but by historical evidence, it was impertinent to talk of prophecy, when the inquiry concerned a mere fact only.

But the Considerer, for want of discernment or something else, says, "it is granted the gospel historians suggest there are prophecies which are not to be found in the books they refer to; but this is said not to be material." He leaves out the words, "to the present question," and goes on; "Strange! is it not material whether what the Evangelists say be true or false? whether this is a true or false insinuation to countenance the history? whether through ignorance they imagined there were prophecies which there were not, and so were deluded? and whether through design they suggested there were, and so deceived others?" All this is very well; but before the Considerer can be intitled to the full merit of it, he must show what he is doing, and whom he means to confute. He appears to me to be hunting down nothing but a very great blunder of his own.

The objector to the truth of the resurrection says, "in other cases the evidence supports the credit of the history; but here the evidence itself is presumed only on the credit which the history has gained." The Considerer quotes the words, and intro-

duces them in this manner, "it is true that in other cases, &c." and refers the reader to the Trial; as if the words produced expressed the sense of the author of the Trial himself. The Considerer was made sensible of this mistake, and though the passage still stands, and very improperly, in his new edition, yet he has taken some care to cover the blunder by dropping the reference to the Trial.

But let us see in other instances how fairly the Considerer deals.

The author of the Trial, to show that the Jews in guarding the sepulchre betrayed a secret conviction of the truth of the miracles performed by Christ in his lifetime, says,

"For had they been persuaded that he wrought no wonders in his life, I think they would not have been afraid of seeing any done by him after his death."

The Considerer quotes these words thus:

"They being persuaded he performed no miracles in his life, were not afraid of seeing any done by him after his death."

Again, the author of the Trial, to show the inconsistency of Woolston's scheme, says,

"Surely this is a most singular case; when the people thought him a prophet, the chief priests sought to kill him, and thought his death would put an end to his pretensions; when they and the people had discovered him to be a cheat, then they thought him not safe, even when he was dead, but were afraid he should prove a true prophet, and, according to his own prediction, rise again."

"Therefore 'that they should kill him, that his death might put an end to all pretensions; yet think him not safe when he was dead is,' I must own, 'a needless and preposterous fear, and a most singular case,' as the gentleman (meaning the author of the Trial) rightly expresses it."

By this artful abuse of the language of the Trial, he makes

the reader imagine that he has convicted the author out of his own mouth.

Once more; amongst other things amazingly acted, as he expresses himself, the Considerer reckons this for one, that St. Matthew should be admitted as an evidence in a court to prove a fact when he was absent; and for this amazing thing he refers the reader to the Trial.

I thought it impossible that the author of the Trial should give any handle for so impertinent an objection to the credit of St. Matthew. St. Matthew is an historian; and who ever objected to an historian, that he was not present at all the transactions he reports? However I turned to the Trial, but not one word is there about the credit of St. Matthew; nor is it easy to discern what the Considerer refers to without supposing him guilty of a great blunder, and not to know the difference between an historian and one produced as an eye-witness.

The author of the Trial objects to the credibility of the story made by the guards of the sepulchre, because their own relation shows they were asleep when the things they related happened. And to this purpose he says, "I would ask the gentleman whether he has any authorities in point, to show that ever any man was admitted as an evidence in any court to prove a fact which happened when he was asleep?" This, I suppose, must be the passage on the strength of which the author of the Trial is made a party to the objection against the credit of St. Matthew; and it shows how well qualified the Considerer is to determine on the credit of the gospel historians, when he does not apprehend the plainest thing relating to evidence, what is necessary to give credit to an eye-witness, and what to an historian.

After these instances there is little reason to expect from this hand a judicious or a fair answer to the Trial.

The Considerer seems to me to have set out at first with a design only to write against the credit of the resurrection, as reported by the evangelists; and that it was an after-thought, and meant to give himself some air of importance, to work up his book into an Answer to the Trial. It is plainly a piece of patchwork, and has but little in it to intitle it to be called an

"Answer to the Trial." Has he weighed the arguments on both sides of the question as stated in the Trial, and showed where the author of the Trial either dissembled the force of the objection, or failed in the answer to it? Nothing like it. He does not so much as pretend it. He has found an easier method of making an appearance of an Answer to the Trial: some passages taken independently of the argument of which they are a part, he has singled out to furnish matter of controversy; but as these were too few in number to make a decent appearance of quotations from a book which he professed to answer, he has taken the liberty to use the language of the Trial to his own purpose, and has distinguished it by italics, and referred the reader to the Trial, even where the words by the additions and alterations made by the Considerer are turned to a sense directly contrary to that in which the author of the Trial used them. And by this little art the Considerer appears to an unwary reader to be quoting and confuting the Trial of the Witnesses.

As much as the Considerer has perverted, altered, and misapplied the passages he has taken from the Trial, it is nothing in comparison with his abuse of the writers of the New Testament, whom he treats as impostors and cheats, and void even of cunning to tell their own story plausibly.

St. Matthew is charged with forging a prophecy; and Matthew, Mark, and Luke, with fraudulent designs; and again, "there is reason," he says, "to suspect all the predictions of it (that is, the resurrection) inserted in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, to be forgery."

St. Matthew has given an account of guarding and sealing the sepulchre; the other evangelists say nothing of it. On this the Considerer says they tell different stories. How so? does a man who says nothing of the story tell a different story, or contradict the story? Yes, this is the Considerer's logic; and he says expressly in a like case, "St. John says not a word of it, but denies it all." On this kind of reasoning, if it is reasoning, the Considerer charges all the four evangelists with forgery, and supposes that St. Matthew's story being detected, Mark and Luke tell another; theirs being also confuted,

John comes and tells a story different from all the rest; and this vehement charge is founded in this only, that Mark, Luke, and John say nothing about it.

At this rate how easily may all historical facts be confuted. It is but saying the histories are forged; and it requires no great head, provided there be a good face, to say it of any history in the world. But there will be an opportunity of examining this fact of guarding the sepulchre, and the Considerer's reasoning on it, in what is to follow.

But the Considerer, not content to charge the evangelists with forgery, has, to impose on those who will rely on his word, forged things for them. John the Baptist says to the Jews, 'think not to say within yourselves we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham:' Matt. iii. 9. Let us see now how the Considerer reports this passage. His words are: "some believe that absurdities and contradictions are possible to the power of God; he can raise children from the loins of Abraham out of the stones of the street." He plainly saw that the passage as it stood in St. Matthew afforded no color for his abuse, and therefore he adds, 'from the loins of Abraham.' I desire the reader to consider whose forgery this is.

At p. 67. of the first edition, and p. 54. of the third, there occurs one of the most extraordinary passages that is any where to be found, and shows with what conscience the Considerer applies Scripture to his purpose. He is treating of the ascension, and endeavors to prove that the accounts given of it by the evangelists do not agree. With respect to St. John he says, "John leaves us at all uncertainties, and says Jesus went, like a wandering Jew, without bidding them good-bye, the Lord knows where!" To support this remark he refers to John xxi. 19. 20. &c. The case there is briefly this: our Lord after his resurrection foretels to Peter, 'by what death he shall glorify God.' St. Peter inquires what was to become of St. John? Our Lord says, 'if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me;' that is, what is it to you what becomes of him? Do you follow the example I have set you, and glorify God by your death. One may some-

times see what handle people take to misrepresent Scripture; but in this instance it is difficult to discern what could lead to this wild conceit. Could it be the word follow? 'Follow me;' did the Considerer suppose him to mean wandering and rambling over the world? It can be nothing else. But does he suppose that no disciple can follow his master but by taking a journey with him? I apprehend the Considerer to be a follower of Woolston and the Moral Philosopher, but I never inquired how far he travelled with them.

These instances, which I have selected from many of the same kind, will show how considerable and how fair an adversary this gentleman is. I have brought them in one view, that they might not stand in the way, and divert us from attending to his reasoning against the truth of the resurrection.

SECTION II.

Before I come to the points which more immediately affect the evidence of the resurrection, I shall take notice of one remark which the Considerer has dropped at the close of his introduction, and which relates to the credit of revelation in general.

It had been observed in the Trial, "that revelation is by the common consent of mankind the very best foundation of religion, and therefore every impostor pretends to it." In answer to which the Considerer says, "I conceive that which is the foundation of any, much less of every false religion, cannot be the foundation of the true." What poor sophistry is this! Cannot this great Considerer see the difference between a real and a pretended foundation? Let him try it in his own favorite virtue, sincerity. Sincerity is by common consent the very best foundation of a good character, and therefore all knaves pretend to it. Will the Considerer in this case say, that which is the foundation of every bad character cannot be the foundation of a good one? It is to no purpose to controvert such points; and I think this passage from the Trial was produced only to give the Considerer an opportunity of entering into his darling common-place of abusing revelation, and drawing together what has been retailed a hundred times

over by all the little traders in infidelity, and has been as often answered to the satisfaction of all sober inquirers.

The first point that more directly affects the credit of the resurrection is the nature and quality of the evidence. The Considerer begins with complaining grievously that all the evidence is on the side of the resurrection, and that he can find none against it; and this he thinks is a very hard case on him. "If the resurrection," says he, "be a fraud or the evidence forged, what books have we to prove it so?" This is indeed a hard case. But if he should take it into his head to prove that Cæsar was not killed in the senate-house, he might begin with the same complaint; for all the evidence would be on one side, and all against him.

But he imagines there was anciently a great stock of evidence against the truth of the resurrection, but that it has been unhappily lost or destroyed. "It is certain," he says, "books have been written by Porphyry, Celsus, and others, which contained what the Christians thought were best answered by stifling and burning. It is well known from some fragments of them in Origen, that they contradicted what is related in the evangelists." Who furnishes the Considerer with his learning I know not; but whoever he is, he has cheated him abominably. Fragments of Porphyry and Celsus in Origen! why Origen was dead before Porphyry set pen to paper. When Origen answered Celsus, Porphyry could not be above sixteen years of age, and not above twenty or twenty-one when Origen died. I imagine by the order in which he places them, that he took Porphyry to be older than Celsus, and that Origen having written against Celsus, could not but take notice of Porphyry too. But there was indeed about a hundred years between Celsus and Porphyry.

"Porphyry and Celsus," he says, "contradicted what is related in the evangelists;" and so does the Considerer too; but what then? Is the credit of any history the worse, because it is wantonly contradicted, without evidence or authority of any sort to support the contradiction? The Considerer, I suspect, means to introduce Celsus and Porphyry as witnesses against the history of the gospel. If he does, he is mistaken. They were just such witnesses against the gospel as he is; and

for want of evidence to contradict the evangelists, they were forced to rely on the disagreements, which they supposed were to be found in the several accounts given by the evangelists.

Had there ever been good evidence against the gospel history, it could not have been lost in Celsus's time; for Celsus lived at no great distance from the Apostolic age; at a time when all religions were tolerated but the Christian; when no evidence was stifled, no books destroyed but those of Christians. And yet Celsus labored under the same want of evidence as Woolston and his auxiliaries, and had the gospel only to search (as Origen more than once observes) for evidence against the gospel. A strong proof that there never had been books of any credit in the world, that questioned the gospel facts, when so spiteful and so artful an adversary as Celsus made no use of them.

Celsus admits the truth of Christ's miracles. The difference between him and Origen lies in the manner of accounting for them; the one ascribing them to the power of God, the other to the power of magic. So that if the Considerer will stand to the evidence of his own witness, the question will not be, whether the miracles are true in fact, (for that is granted on both sides,) but whether the truth of the miracles infers the divine authority of the performer? Now can it be supposed that Celsus would have admitted the miracles of Christ as real facts, had he not been compelled to it by the universal consent of all men in the age he lived?

But why does the Considerer complain for want of the assistance of Celsus, and lead his readers to imagine that the books of Celsus were destroyed because they could not be answered? Does he not know that there is hardly a plausible argument, produced by Woolston or himself, that is not borrowed from Celsus? The truth is, that the objections of Celsus are preserved, and preserved in his own language. Origen's answer is not a general reply to Celsus, but a minute examination of all his objections, even of those which appeared to Origen most frivolous; for his friend Ambrosius, to whom he dedicates the work, desires him to omit nothing. In order to this examination, Origen states the objections of Celsus in his

own words; and that nothing might escape him, he takes them in the order in which Celsus had placed them. Celsus then, as it happens, is safe; and the Considerer needs not lament over him any more.

The case of Porphyry is different; there is little remaining of him, but some dispersed fragments to be found in Eusebius and Jerome. However this is certain from the account remaining of him, that he had no evidence against the gospel history but what the gospel itself furnished; in which he thought he saw, or pretended to see, contradiction. How indeed should he have any other evidence, when Celsus had no other, who lived so much nearer the Apostolic age than he did?

If the Considerer is laying in a stock of evidence on the antichristian side, he may put down in his list the Emperor Julian and the Talmudic books of the Jews, together with some others, whose evidence, such as it is, is still in being. Here then are witnesses against the Apostles, the most determined enemies that Christianity ever had; and yet the Considerer will find no reason to thank them for their evidence. They agree with Celsus in admitting the miracles, and so in truth serve only to support that cause which they meant to destroy.

The case then standing thus, the Considerer must be content to follow the steps of his great leaders, and search the gospel for objections against the gospel. This is another hardship, and the subject of another complaint: "if the resurrection be a fraud or the evidence forged, what books have we to prove it so? Can it be expected that an equitable issue should be obtained from what may be fairly reasoned out of their own report?" If the Considerer had no better hopes, why did he trouble himself and the world? Did he propose, because nothing could be fairly reasoned out of the gospel, to reason something out of it unfairly? He has indeed done so, but did not, I suppose, mean to give warning of it.

But this is not the whole of his complaint. "Can that," says he, "be esteemed a fair trial, where the evidences are only on one side the question," &c. Why not? Was full and clear evidence ever rejected, because there was no evidence to

be produced against it? The case must always be so where the truth is notorious. The main facts relating to our Saviour were as public and as well known in Judea and the neighboring countries, when the gospels were published, as the coronation of Henry VIII. was known in his time in England; and if the Considerer has a mind to call that fact in question, he will find the witnesses all on one side.

He goes on. "To find the truth of a case by the testimony of partial evidence combined against it, must be owned to be a difficult task."

In the first place, how does he know the witnesses are partial? It is not a thing to be taken for granted; and proof he brings none. I imagine he supposes every witness to be partial to the side for which he gives evidence; and if so, then every faithful witness to truth is a partial evidence; and the more sincerely concerned for the truth, the more partial still.

Secondly, Why does he call the evangelists combined witnesses? Is it not the purpose and drift of his whole book to show them contradicting one another in almost every instance? How then were they combined together? Was it part of their agreement to contradict one another? Why did he not tell us what was their view in combining together? We know that they were oppressed by Jews and heathens, that they attested the truth of the facts they delivered at the peril of their lives daily, and at last died miserably and violently in confirmation of the truth. You see what their combination tended to!

Another question the Considerer has chosen to debate, is about the nature of Christ's kingdom. It very little concerns the resurrection, but we must take it in our way. Many passages are produced from the Trial, all speaking to this effect; "that Jesus did not pretend to a temporal kingdom; and that he expounded the ancient prophecies relating to the Messias in a different manner than his countrymen did, who expected a temporal prince for their Messias." Among these quotations some are taken out of the mouth of the pleader against the resurrection, and ascribed to the author of the Trial; but this happens so frequently, that it would be endless to take notice of it as often as it occurs. But let us see to what purpose these passages are produced.

It was a part of Woolston's scheme to charge Christ with a secret design of getting temporal power, notwithstanding he openly disavowed all such pretensions. In answer to this the author of the Trial showed, from the uniform character and conduct of Jesus, that Woolston's notion was void of all color of support. Does the Considerer now enter into the argument as it stands in the trial? No. But he takes the passages independently of the argument, of which they are a part; and thinks that taken by themselves they are not true. Be it so; what then does it signify to the fact of the resurrection, which he was to disprove? Why all this parade of many quotations from the Trial, since they do not relate to the point in dispute? Some good friend, I suspect, had asked the Considerer these questions, which he could not answer; and though he was unwilling to part with so many quotations at once, yet to prevent the same questions being asked him again, he has in his new edition confessed that "be this (that is, the ancient prophecies of the kingdom) mystically or conditionally true, it concerns not the resurrection. Yet let not truth be denied."

Well then, the credit of the resurrection is so far safe. But he thinks it not true that Christ declined temporal power; and truth must not be denied. He goes on to produce prophecies, that God would give him the throne of his father David, and says that he was called king of Israel, king of the Jews, and rebuked not those who gave him the title. And why should he rebuke them, since he claimed that title, and never denied that he was king of the Jews? But the Considerer seems not to know that there never was a question between Jews and Christians, whether Jesus was or pretended to be a temporal prince. Both sides agree that he neither was nor pretended to be. But the question was and is, whether, according to ancient prophecy, the Messias was to be a temporal prince. Had not the prophets declared him to be a great prince, there would have been no dispute whether he was to be a temporal or a spiritual prince. Quoting therefore these prophecies will not determine the question; for the doubt is not, whether there are such prophecies or no, but what is the meaning of them.

The Considerer says that "Jesus was commonly called king of the Jews, only he had not the kingdom; therefore when he

was about to suffer for it, he found it was not of this world. This confession he prudently made at a proper time, though it had not the effect to save his life." After what has already appeared of this author's spirit, it is in vain to complain of the impiety of this charge of fraud and deceit on our blessed Saviour. There is one to whom he must answer for it. In the mean time, how will he answer to reasonable inquirers the disingenuity of concealing that Jesus, so far from denying himself to be the king of the Jews, confessed it before Pilate?* And as to the nature of this kingdom he declared it 'not to be of this world.'† With what conscience now does the Considerer ask, "how it appears by any thing recorded that Jesus explained away the kingly office of the Messias?" Explain it away! No. He insisted on it to the last. But if he means to ask whether Jesus ever explained away the temporal kingdom, it is manifest from every part and every circumstance of his life that he never claimed it. If he means to ask whether Jesus ever explained the nature of the kingdom of the Messias, what more is wanting than his confession to Pilate, that he was king of the Jews, and that his 'kingdom was not of this world?' Was it not sufficiently declaring that the ancient prophecies, which foretold the kingdom of the Messias, did not mean a temporal kingdom?

But if Christ did not pretend to temporal power, the Considerer says, "why was the government alarmed, and Jesus looked on as a person dangerous to the state, who was the best friend among the Jews the Roman government had, to preserve the people from enthusiastic seditions? If this be true, it was the worst policy in the world for the Romans to put him to death." The Considerer here has by chance deviated into more truth than he was aware of. Jesus was indeed the very person proper to preserve the people from enthusiastic seditions, and so far a friend to the Roman government. But who told him the Roman government was alarmed? Why he has it from the Trial; but according to custom has taken the Objector's words for the words of the author of the Trial. And the Considerer would not have argued on this supposition, had he at-

* Matt. xxix. 11. Mark xv. 2. Luke xxiii. 3. John xviii. 37.
† John xviii. 36.

tended in the least to the gospel history. Where does he read that the Roman government was alarmed, and thought Jesus a person dangerous to the state? Where does he find that the Roman government persecuted him to death? The Jewish government indeed did; but Pilate came unwillingly into their measures, and consented not to his death till overborn by clamor and sedition.

What the Considerer had in view in this confused discourse about Christ's kingdom, I cannot guess. He seems to think Jesus understood the prophecies to relate to a temporal kingdom, and in consequence claimed it, and that he did not renounce a kingdom of this world, till driven to it by despair and necessity. But where did he learn this secret? Not from the gospel history, nor yet from any enemies of the gospel, whether Jews or heathens; who never have charged Jesus with setting up for temporal power. The Jews object to him the want of temporal power, which they imagine their Messias is to exercise in the fullest extent, but never accuse him for pretending to it. One would imagine it impossible for any one, who had read the four gospels or any one of them, to entertain this conceit.

Look into the gospel; every page will afford a proof that Jesus, though he claimed to be the king of the Jews foretold in the ancient prophets, yet he disclaimed all temporal power and greatness. When one of the scribes offered to become his disciple, what encouragement did he find? Possibly this scribe might conceive hopes of having a share in the temporal kingdom, which he and his countrymen expected. But our Lord undeceives him, and tells him, 'the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.'*

When our Lord sent out his twelve disciples, he orders them expressly 'to preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'† In order then to establish this kingdom, what power does he give them? Were they to issue out proclamations notifying that the victorious prince was come, and calling on all his subjects to arm, and to attend him? Nothing less. He gives them 'power against unclean spirits,' and 'to heal all dis-

* Matt. viii. 20. † Ibid. x. 7.

eases.'* But as to their condition in this world, he tells them they should 'be brought before governors' † for his sake, and 'be hated of all men;' ‡ and advises them for their safety, 'when persecuted in one city to flee to another.' § Are these proofs of his claiming temporal power?

In like manner, and with like oommission, he sent out the seventy disciples. They return with great joy and relate to him their success: 'Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning, fall from heaven.' ‖ You see it was the kingdom of Satan he came to destroy, and not the kingdom of Cæsar.

The Apostles were in the same mistake with the rest of their countrymen, and expected a temporal kingdom; and the sons of Zebedee were early solicitors to be first ministers. Our Lord corrects their error, and tells them his kingdom was a very different thing from the kingdoms of the world. 'Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the gentiles, exercise lordship over them—But so it shall not be among you; but whosoever would be great among you, shall be your minister.' ¶

The Considerer thinks no regard is to be had to our Lord's confession before Pilate. Let us see then whether he had not made the same declaration to the rulers of the Jews before, and when he was in no immediate danger.

The rulers of the Jews very well knew that Jesus claimed to be king of the Jews foretold by the ancient prophets; and being possessed with an opinion that their wished-for king was to be a temporal prince, they were greatly scandalised at his pretensions to be king of the Jews, in whom they could discover no power or inclination to deliver them from the Roman yoke. They determine therefore to put him to the proof, and to force him either to declare against the Roman government, or to renounce his pretensions to the kingdom of Israel. The pharisees and Herodians address him with profound respect, the better to cover their ensnaring question: 'Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, nei-

* Matth. x. 1. † Ib. 18. ‡ Ibid. 22. § Ib. 23.
‖ Luke x. 17. 18. ¶ Mark x. 42. 43.

ther carest thou for any man, for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?'* Had our Lord declared against the Roman power, they would have had matter of accusation against him. Had he declared for it, he would in their opinion have renounced his claim to be king of the Jews, and given them an opportunity of inflaming the people against him, who could not bear the thought that the king of the Jews should be subject to the king of the Romans. But he 'perceived their wickedness and said, Show me the tribute money.' When they showed a penny, he asked, 'Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' Could a clearer answer be given to show that the kingdom to be set up by God and the kingdom of Cæsar were consistent together, without interfering with each other, since the Jews might pay obedience to both, without offending either? And if the kingdom to be set up by God according to ancient prophecies, was to submit to the kingdom of Cæsar, it is manifest it could not be a temporal kingdom, nor the prince of that kingdom such a victorious prince as the scribes and pharisees expected. Is not then this answer to the pharisees and Herodians the very same thing with our Lord's confession before Pilate, that he was indeed king of the Jews, but his kingdom was not of this world.

I will refer the reader but to one passage more on this head. In Matt. xxi. our Lord, in a parable, shows the rulers of the Jews that the kingdom they expected would, for their wicked and obstinate behavior, be taken from them; a hard lesson for them to learn who expected to conquer the world, when once their kingdom was come! It is said expressly, ver. 45. that the chief priests and pharisees 'perceived that he spake of them, and sought to lay hands on him.'

The author of the Trial had said that Jesus fell into disgrace with his countrymen, and suffered for opposing their notions of a victorious Messias. To which the Considerer says, "I believe

* Matth. xxii. 16. 17.

it cannot be proved that Jesus suffered for this cause." Very concise! but what conceit must he have of his own opinion, if he thinks it ought to pass without proof for a sufficient answer to such evidence?

The next question started by the Considerer is, "whether Christ foretold his own death and resurrection;" and he is willing to think he did not, but for no other reason that I can find, but because the author of the Trial asserts that he did. The Considerer had observed before, "that the conquest the Trial seems to have over Mr. Woolston, was occasioned by his granting too much;" and he is determined to avoid this fault, and to grant nothing. "I am not sure," says he, "that Jesus did foretel his own death and resurrection, only that the evangelists say he did; nor that he referred to the authority of ancient prophecies, to prove that the Messias was to die and rise again, only that I read so." What does all this amount to? Has he not manifestly given up this point to the author of the Trial? for what did that author undertake more than to show from the evangelists that Christ foretold his death and resurrection? and the Considerer admits that the evangelists indeed tell him so. One would think now the dispute over. No: the Considerer will not take their word. Well then; what proof has he to the contrary? None; he pretends to none; but is determined not to believe them. I admire at his modesty in calling his book an Answer to the Trial only; he might with as good reason have called it an answer to all that ever was or ever will be published in defence of Christianity; for all depends on the credit of the gospel history.

But he says the evangelists report prophecies which were never delivered; and this he proves from the concession of the author of the Trial. But this piece of management (hardly to be called by so soft a name as a mistake) has been taken notice of before, to which I refer the reader.

Let us then examine this question, whether Christ foretold his death and resurrection?

1. The Considerer maintains that the chief priests and rulers of the Jews never heard of any prediction of the death and resurrection of Christ, and hence infers that they had no pretence for guarding the sepulchre, and consequently that the account

given by St. Matthew of guarding and sealing the sepulchre is all forgery.

2. He admits that Christ five times foretold his death and resurrection to his disciples, and that in so plain a manner that it was impossible for them not to understand him clearly. But it appearing in the history of the gospel that they did not understand him, he infers there were no such predictions, but that they are mere forgery.

As he allows the five predictions to the disciples to be clear and express, there is nothing wanting under this head but to account for what is said in the gospel, that the disciples did not understand what was said to them, which will be considered in due time.

As to the Jews, whether they had any reason to apprehend that Christ might probably prove a true prophet, and rise from the dead, must appear not only from the predictions said to be given them, but from what they could not avoid knowing, the many miracles done in his lifetime; for it is the character of the person in this case that gives weight to the prediction. The author of the Trial put it on this foot. "It must necessarily be that they had discovered something in the life and actions of Christ which raised this jealousy, and made them listen to a prophecy in this case, which in any other they would have despised. For had the Jews been persuaded that he performed no wonders in his life, they would not have been afraid of seeing any done by him after his death."

The Considerer, in answer to this reasoning, resorts in the first place to his usual charge, that the account given of the apprehension the Jews were under, and their concern to guard the sepulchre, is all forgery. But out of this forged account he has taken two words, which pass with him for authentic history. The Jews say unto Pilate, 'Sir, we remember that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.' Now the Considerer says the Jews never applied to Pilate; but the whole relation, every word of it is a cheat — excepting only the words *that deceiver;* and from thence he argues thus: "the chief priests and pharisees believed Jesus to be a deceiver, if we take their opinion from their own words, viz.: 'we remember that deceiver said.'" From this lame,

crippled, and at best misrepresented piece of history, the Considerer draws a consequence which is to stand against the united authority of all the gospels, viz. that the Jews were persuaded he performed no wonders in his life.

What now is to be done? must I transcribe great part of the gospels to confute so shameless an assertion? I would hope that no Christian is so unacquainted with the history of Christ as to want any assistance in this case. But however, to give satisfaction to all, who are willing to receive it, I will produce some few passages, in which the scribes, pharisees, and chief priests themselves, were either eye-witnesses of the miracles, or appear fully acquainted with them.

On our Lord's first appearance, and 'healing all manner of diseases among the people, his fame went through all Syria; and there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.'* Is it possible when all the country was thus alarmed with the miracles, that the chief priests and rulers should be the only persons unacquainted with them? Many of his miracles were performed in public places of resort, in presence of the scribes and pharisees, 'and they took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.'† But so far were they from denying that miracles were wrought, that they endeavor to account for them; 'this fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.'‡ In the very temple itself 'the blind and the lame came to him, and he healed them.'§ And it follows immediately, 'when the chief priests and pharisees saw the wonderful things that he did, they were sore displeased.' When our Lord healed the blind man, who sat begging by the way, the pharisees had the blind man before them and his parents also, and examined them strictly as to his miraculous cure.‖ And after all their inquiry they were forced to admit the truth of the miracle, however unwilling they were to admit the divine power of Jesus. The scribes were witnesses to the cure wrought on one sick of the palsy, in the presence of a great multitude.¶ When

* Matth. iv. 23. &c. † Matth. xii. 10. &c. ‡ Ib. ver. 24.
§ Matth. xxi. 14. ‖ John ix. ¶ Mark ii. 6.

Lazarus was raised from the dead, the chief priests and pharisees debate in council, what was to be done on it: 'What do we, for this man doth many miracles?'*

It would be endless to produce all the passages of Scripture that speak to the same purpose. These already cited will enable the reader to apply the rest, which so frequently occur.

The question now is, what effect these miracles had on the scribes and chief priests? That they were extremely alarmed appears plainly, and that they sought his life, as the only method to stop the influence he gained over the people, is notorious. But were they clear of all doubts themselves? Had they no misgivings of mind, that he might possibly be what he pretended to be? Consider their behavior after they had secured his person, and carried him before Pilate: they accuse him of many things, and among the rest of sedition against the Roman government. Had they believed it themselves, what need of farther examination? What occasion had they to inquire of a cheat and an impostor, whether he was the Christ of God or no? And yet the chief priests made this inquiry with the utmost concern and solemnity: 'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God.'† Had the chief priest no suspicion, no jealousy that he might be the Christ, when he made this solemn adjuration to him? Would he have used the same form to the same purpose to Barabbas or any other common malefactor? The thing speaks itself, and shows the anxiety of mind under which the chief priest acted, and how far he was from being satisfied that Jesus was an impostor and a deceiver.

When our blessed Lord hung on the cross, the chief priests and elders recovered spirit and said,—'he saved others, himself he cannot save.'‡ He saved others! What! do they mean that he never wrought any miracles, as the Considerer supposes? Quite otherwise, they acknowlege his miracles by which others were saved, referring (it is probable) to his raising the dead; but they imagined now they had found the extent of his power, and that he could not save himself. It will perhaps be said,

* John xi. 47. † Matth. xxvi. 63. ‡ Ibid. xxvii. 42.

this was mockery. Be it so; there was no mockery in saying, 'he saved others;' the insult is expressed in the other part, 'himself he cannot save.' They go on with their mockery; 'if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross.' But why all this triumph in being delivered from the king of Israel? had they never suspected that he might possibly prove so indeed, what occasion for this sudden joy and exultation?

But this mirth did not last long. When Christ died, nature seemed to die with him; 'there was darkness over all the earth, the sun was darkened and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.'* The Roman centurion was so affected with it, that 'he glorified God, saying, This was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.'† In what manner the chief priests and scribes behaved on this occasion, we are not told. Probably they withdrew silently, unwilling to discover any fear or apprehension before the people. But could they be unaffected? If ever they had heard of our Lord's prophecy, that he would rise again, could they help remembering it now? They had seen him expire on the cross, but that was no ease to their minds in reflecting on the prophecy of his resurrection; for he had foretold his death and the manner of it, as well as his resurrection. The first part they had seen accomplished, and had reason to fear the last would be so.

Lay these things together: the chief priests had been witnesses of his power to work miracles in his lifetime; they knew he claimed to be king of the Jews; they knew he had owned to Pilate that he was king of the Jews; and under a most solemn adjuration from the chief priest, even when he was his prisoner, he had confessed that he was the Christ the Son of God, and that they should see him again coming in glory. They had heard him even on the cross maintain his character, and promise paradise to the penitent thief; they saw the sun darkened, the veil of the temple rent; the Roman guard at the cross, and all the spectators astonished. Surrounded with this

* Luke xxiii. 44. 45. † Ver. 47. 48.

amazing scene, could they despise the predictions of his resurrection? Could they remember them without great apprehensions that they might prove true? Whoever can suppose it, not only contradicts the express declaration of the gospel history, but shows himself to be but little acquainted with the sentiments of human nature.

But here the Considerer stops us again. He says, "he finds no account, where or when such public prophecy was delivered before the priests and pharisees in any of the four evangelists." But what if such prophecies were delivered before others, and reported by persons of credit to the chief priests and pharisees, will not that be sufficient? He thinks not; but all the reason he has for thinking so is, because they say to Pilate, 'We remember that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.' "Now," says he, "the words, *we remember*, signify that they heard him say so." It is very hard work to be obliged to defend against such a writer, not only common sense, but common language. Where does he learn that the word *remember* is never used but of things spoken directly to ourselves? Cannot a man remember what he reads and what is reported to him? The chief priests do not say, 'we remember he said *to us*,' but, 'we remember he said, while he was yet alive;' but to whom he said, or how it came to their knowlege, they do not say.

The Considerer thinks the Jews could not possibly understand what our Saviour said of the sign of Jonas, to relate to his resurrection. I differ intirely with him; and though I do not suppose our Saviour did intend it as a clear prophecy to be understood at the time it was spoken, yet the words used came so near to a description of a resurrection, that if once the Jews became at all apprehensive of a resurrection, they could not but apply our Saviour's words to it. But be this as it will; let us examine whether the chief priests and scribes had not other ways of coming to the knowlege of what they affirm, that Jesus said in his lifetime, 'After three days I will rise again.'

The Considerer admits that our Lord did five times foretel to his disciples that he should die and rise again the third day. So plain and clear he takes these predictions to be, that he can-

not believe there is any truth in the gospel, when it tells us the disciples understood them not. But though they did not understand the meaning of the prophecy, for reasons to be given hereafter, yet they understood the language or the import of the words; or else what did St. Peter (if he understood not the words) reprove his lord for when he foretold this event? If they understood the literal sense of the words spoken to them, they might report them, and others understand the meaning, though they did not. And thus at least the chief priests might come to know that Jesus had foretold his resurrection.

But the Considerer seems to suppose that these predictions were private, given to the Apostles only, and that they were injoined secrecy; and for the sake of his argument he is willing for once to suppose the Apostles to act honestly, and to keep the secret; and consequently that the report of these prophecies could not reach the chief priests. But his reasoning is founded on two mistakes; for, first, it does not appear that all the five predictions were made to the Apostles only: secondly, it is plain in the gospel history, secrecy was not injoined with respect to these predictions.

A little attention to the history will clear up these facts.

We read in St. Luke of Christ's disciples, before ever he had chosen Apostles; and it is said expressly, Luke vi. 13. 'He called his disciples to him, and out of them he chose twelve, whom also he named Apostles.' And at v. 17. they are distinguished from the company of disciples, who attend him. His twelve disciples or Apostles are sent out to preach, Luke ix. 1. Seventy other disciples are sent with like commission, Luke x. 1. These last were disciples, though not Apostles. This being the case, there is no reason to conclude that when the gospel tells us that our Lord made any declaration to his disciples that such declaration was made to the Apostles only. And it is observable that when the evangelists iutend to distinguish the Apostles from other disciples, they call them either Apostles, or the twelve, and not simply disciples. Thus Luke ix. 1. 'When he had called the twelve disciples, he gave them power,' &c. St. Matthew likewise denotes by the same character 'his twelve disciples:' x. 1. and in the following verse calls them Apostles. In the sixth of St. John the dis-

tinction is most evident; at verse 66. we read, 'From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.' It follows; 'then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?' The disciples then present at our Lord's discourse were more, probably many more, than the Apostles. It is not therefore necessarily to be concluded that, when our Saviour foretold his resurrection to his disciples, none were present but the twelve Apostles.

Let us now take the predictions as they are ranged by the Considerer. The first is made to the disciples;* the second only to Peter, James and John;† the third to his disciples;‡ and the fourth and fifth were to the twelve Apostles only.§ And it is observable that all the evangelists who mention the second prediction, take care to inform us that it was given to Peter, James, and John only; and all who report the fourth and fifth, say expressly it was given to the twelve only. How comes it then to pass that in reporting the first and third they leave it at large, and tell us that these predictions were made to the disciples? Is there not reason to suppose that they were made to more than to the twelve, who in the other instances are distinguished as the only persons present?

The Considerer observes on the third prediction, that St. Mark says, 'he passed through Galilee, and would not that any man should know it, for he taught his disciples, The Son of man is delivered,' &c.—'and shall rise the third day.'‖ On which the Considerer says, "observe—the reason why Jesus desired privacy was, because he told this to his disciples, and would have nobody else know it." That our Saviour told this to the disciples and not to the multitude, is admitted. But the question is who these disciples were, whether the twelve only, or others together with them; and the Considerer's observation is of no moment towards determining this point.

I do not pretend to affirm that the twelve may not be some-

* Matth. xvi. 13. 21, &c. Mark viii. 27. 31. Luke ix. 18. 22.

† Matth. xvii. 1. 9. Mark ix. 2. 9.

‡ Matth. xvii. 19. 22. Mark ix. 29. 31.

§ Matth. xx. 17. &c. Mark x. 32. &c. Luke xvii. 31. &c. Matth. xxvi. 20. 32. Mark xiv. 17. 28.

‖ Mark ix. 30. &c.

times meant where disciples only are mentioned without any other distinction; but for the reasons given the Considerer had no right to take it for granted that all the predictions were given to the twelve only, and to raise speculations on this supposition.

Had the Considerer known what a due attention to the gospels would have taught him, the reason of our Lord's opening to his disciples and Apostles the sufferings he was to undergo, he would not have suspected any deceit in his conduct. When our Saviour gathered disciples at first, and out of them chose twelve Apostles, he sent them out to preach that the kingdom was at hand, and gave them great powers over unclean spirits and all diseases. After some time he inquires of them what the world thought of him; they report to him the different opinions the country had of him. He then asks, 'but whom say ye that I am?' Peter in the name of the rest answers, 'Thou art the Christ.' On which he began immediately (as the three evangelists expressly observe) to teach them what things the Son of man should suffer, and that he should rise the third day. Consider now what was the connexion between St. Peter's confession, and the prediction of the sufferings and resurrection of Christ, which so closely followed it. The disciples had preached the approach of the kingdom, had found, by the powers bestowed on them, what power their Master had; and our Lord now perceived, on the confession of Peter, that they took him to be the Christ. He well understood what consequences this notion would produce; he knew the opinion of the Jews in general, and of the disciples too, was, 'that Christ abideth for ever,'* and was to be subject to no power, but to exercise power and dominion without end, which they likewise apprehended to be temporal power and dominion. Our Lord, who took all proper occasions to disclaim temporal power, found it necessary now to guard the conduct of his disciples, who were very likely to give umbrage to the Jews, by the hopes they conceived themselves of seeing their Master a great temporal prince. To prevent these ill effects, he charges them, in the first place, to tell no man that he was the Christ;

* John xii. 34.

for such open declaration to the people, considering what notion they had of the Christ they expected, would have amounted to a claim of temporal power. In the next place, to moderate the expectations of his disciples, and to beat down the pride and vanity which would naturally arise from them, he tells them he was to suffer many things, and even death itself; but at the same time, to keep them from absolute despair, he gives them to understand that he should rise again.

This doctrine he began to teach on the occasion mentioned, as the evangelists particularly remark, intimating that it was frequently repeated and inculcated. So little were the disciples prepared to receive it, that St. Peter rebuked his Master for talking about suffering; 'be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee:'* which explains another passage in the following chapter, very much abused by the Considerer, where our Saviour foretells again, 'the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men. They shall kill him, and the third day he shall rise again; and they were exceeding sorrowful.'† He subjoins to this a passage from St. Mark, where our Saviour tells the disciples, 'the Son of man must be killed, and after he is killed, he shall rise the third day:' and they understood not that saying.‡ Hear now the Considerer: "it is equally strange," says he, "that they should be sorry for what they did not understand, as that they should not understand what they were sorry for." Was ever any thing so perverse? Is it not plain they were sorry to hear how much he was to suffer; and that the saying which they did not understand was his 'rising again from the dead?' They could not conceive how Christ could die, nor what could be meant by his rising again. Is there any inconsistency in this? None, but to such as are wilfully blind.

Our Saviour found it necessary on this occasion not only to acquaint his disciples with the sufferings he was to submit to, but the people also, in order to prevent their having wrong notions of him and his kingdom, should they hear or suspect him to be the Christ; and therefore he adds immediately—'he called the people unto him, with his disciples, and said, Who-

* Matth. xvi. 22. † Matth. xvii. 22. 23. ‡ Mark ix.

soever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.'* So far was our Lord from making a secret of his sufferings, or giving the people any hopes of a temporal deliverance!

But the Considerer supposes that the Apostles were injoined secrecy, and forbid to publish these predictions; on the strength of which suppositions he argues that the chief priests could know nothing of these predictions. The Apostles are indeed injoined secrecy, not with respect to the death and resurrection of Jesus, but with respect expressly to this point only, that he was the Christ. St. Matthew has so determined this, that there can be no doubt; 'then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.'† After the transfiguration, that the disciples who had seen his surprising glory should not from thence raise false notions of his power, he thought proper to injoin them secrecy till after the resurrection: but secrecy in what? Not that he was to suffer and to rise again, but secrecy with respect to the glorious vision they had seen, and the voice from the cloud, which proclaimed him 'Christ the Son of God.'

Lay now these things together, and consider whether it was not probable that the chief priests had perfect intelligence even of these predictions. Our Saviour never made a secret of them; and as some of them were delivered to his disciples in general, and many of his disciples forsook him, (as we read in the sixth of St. John,) the chief priests, who were very inquisitive into the conduct of Jesus, might by report from the Apostles themselves, or at least by report from those disciples who forsook him, have perfect knowlege of these prophecies. But let us go on to other prophecies. The Considerer says he has examined St. John, and finds that he says not a word of it, but denies it all. If he says not a word of it, I would fain know in what words he denies it all. But these beauties occur too frequently to be attended to. As to his examination of St. John, I am by no means willing to rely on it, and must beg leave to examine after him. But how comes he to be so surprised to find the prophecies of Christ's death and resurrection so plainly con-

* Mark ix. 34. † Matth. xvi. 20.

tained in other gospels, omitted in St. John? Did he never hear that St. John, who outlived the other evangelists, was desired by the bishops of Asia to publish a gospel, to perfect and complete the relation of Christ's life and doctrine? They had without question heard many things of him not recorded by the other evangelists, and thought it of great importance to the Christian church to have them transmitted to posterity with the authority of an Apostle. St. John therefore wrote his gospel, not with a design of repeating what the other evangelists had fully delivered, but chiefly to preserve the memory of what they had omitted. These prophecies therefore being (as the Considerer admits) so very clearly contained in the other gospels, was the very reason why St. John omitted them. Whoever with tolerable care compares St. John with the other gospels, will find this to be frequently the case; and it will appear plainly to be so in the history of the women who went first to the sepulchre, which there will be occasion soon to consider.

But though St. John, for the reason already given, has omitted expressly to repeat the predictions mentioned by the other evangelists, yet I own it would be surprising to find no mention made by Christ in his lifetime, of the circumstances of his death and resurrection; considering how many discourses of our Lord to his disciples and others are reported in St. John's gospel. Let us inquire then.

In the twelfth and following chapters, a great part of our Lord's discourses to his disciples plainly refers to the predictions he had given them of his death and resurrection. 'The hour is come,' says our Lord, 'when the Son of man should be glorified.'* Of what hour he speaks appears, ver. 27. 'Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour.' And at chap. xiii. 1. 'And when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world,' &c. The expression made use of by Jesus, 'the hour is come,' supposes the disciples had notice before, that such an hour was to be expected. If so, these passages have reference to the predic-

* John xii. 23.

tions recorded in the other Gospels; if not, they are of themselves predictions, at least of his death. That our Lord himself meant these as predictions is manifest in chap. xiii. 19. where having said that Judas should betray him, he adds, 'now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.' Having given them this notice of his death, he endeavors to support their spirits under the expectation of it. 'Let not your heart be troubled—I go to prepare a place for you*'—'I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.†' 'Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you.‡' 'A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me.'§ These and many other like passages in St. John relate plainly to the death and resurrection of Christ; of which, if you take the Considerer's word, St. John has said nothing. So far were these predictions from being delivered as secrets to the Apostles, that St. John informs us he foretold his sufferings to many others. When Nicodemus came to him, he tells him, 'that as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.'‖ The same thing in the same language is said to the people.¶ The Considerer will say here is another riddle; what are we to understand by lifting up? Can you have a better interpreter than St. John himself? He will tell you that our Lord used this expression, 'signifying what death he should die.'** And that the language was well understood at the time, appears by the answer the people made him; 'we have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever; and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?'†† In consequence of this prediction he tells the pharisees, 'yet a little while I am with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me and shall not find me, and where I am, thither ye cannot come.'‡‡ Take now these sayings of St. John, and apply them to the sign of Jonas, and the exposition of it given by our Lord, that the Son of man should be 'three

* John. xiv. 1. 2. † Ver. 18. ‡ xvi. 22. § Ib. 16.
‖ Ib. iii. 14. ¶ Ib. viii. 28. ** Ib. xii. 33.
†† Ib. ver. 34. ‡‡ Ib. vii. 33. 34.

days and three nights in the heart of the earth,' and they will give light to each other, supposing the Jews to have had no clearer predictions of Christ's death and resurrection before them. But that they had clearer, has, I think, already appeared.

But there is still one way more by which this intelligence might come to them. The last prophecy of his death and resurrection was given at his last supper to the twelve Apostles: Judas was at the supper, and heard the prophecy, and went directly to the chief priests to concert measures for apprehending Jesus. Can you imagine that they did not inquire where his Master was, and what he was doing? Can you imagine that Judas would omit to entertain them with an account of the despair in which he left him, prophesying of his death, which he found unavoidable, and filling his disciples' heads with a silly notion of his rising again? If it is natural to suppose this to have been the case, you see a plain way, by which the chief priests came to know that Jesus said in his lifetime, 'that he would rise after three days.'

The Considerer having proved, as he supposes, that the chief priests knew nothing of any prophecy of a resurrection, makes use of it to charge St. Matthew with a forgery, in the story he relates of their guarding the sepulchre. "Can any man of common sense think it probable that the priests and pharisees should be alarmed about the resurrection of Jesus, if they never heard any thing more of it than has been mentioned?" Whether the chief priests were as unacquainted with the prophecies of the resurrection as he supposes, must be left to the reader on what has been already said.

But the Considerer has other objections against the story told by St. Matthew of guarding the sepulchre, which must be attended to. "It is strange that Jesus should so expressly foretel his resurrection to his disciples, and say nothing plainly of it to the scribes and pharisees, yet that they should be so alarmed with the words of a man they did not believe, as to watch for it, and the disciples not understand or expect it." In stating this case the Considerer takes it for granted that the scribes and pharisees had no notice of a resurrection but from the dark intimations to them that the sign of Jonas, &c.

should be given them. If I have given the reader satisfaction that the case was otherwise, and that the scribes and pharisees were apprised of much clearer and more express prophecies of the resurrection, there will be no occasion to give any farther account of their solicitude in guarding the sepulchre. But one question still remains; how came the disciples not to understand these prophecies, and to have no expectation of a resurrection? The fact is admitted, and we are called on to give an account of their behavior.

There is, I think, but one way of accounting for the actions of men; which is by comparing them with their opinions and persuasions, and the circumstances they were in at the time of doing such actions; and considering what men under such circumstances and such persuasions would naturally do. And in this method a very reasonable accouut may be given, both of the conduct of the rulers of the Jews and of the disciples.

Consider now; it was the general and firm persuasion of all the Jews, of the rulers and disciples equally, that the Christ, whenever he came, 'was to abide for ever;' to be a prince of power, to subdue his and his country's enemies with uninterrupted success. This proposition therefore, 'that the Christ should die,' according to the Jewish notion, contained an absolute absurdity. Now the disciples were strong in this opinion, that Jesus was the Christ; they were confirmed in it by every frcsh instance of power and authority which they saw him exert. Our Lord was sensible how this opinion would operate, and therefore, from the time that he found they believed him to be the Christ, he began to preach to them what he was to suffer, and that he was to die and rise again. How they received these declarations appears from St. Peter's rebuking our Lord for making them, and from many other instances which need not be particularly referred to. Add to this, that all their hopes, all their expectations depended on their Master's being a powerful prince. So that to think of his dying was contrary to all they believed of Christ, and contrary to all they hoped for themselves. To overcome all their prejudices and all their passions at once was more than they were able to do. The prophecies spoke so plainly of the sufferings of Christ, that they were surprised and afflicted to hear them;

but how to understand them they knew not, because taken literally they appeared inconsistent with the faith they had professed, 'that Jesus was the Christ.' As little did they apprehend what 'rising again' meant; and how should they understand it? Since they could not conceive how he could die, they could have no notion how or in what manner he could rise. Possibly they thought there was something mysterious in it. It was usual with their Master to discourse them, as well as the multitude, in parables, and to use common expressions in a sense that was hidden and mysterious. They had been long accustomed to this sort of language, and had frequently been puzzled with it. When he bade them to 'beware of the leaven of the pharisees,'* they had little doubt about the meaning of so common a phrase, but the matter they quite mistook. And when he was in the temple, disputing with the Jewish doctors, he said he was 'about his Father's business;† the literal sense of the words was obvious enough, but the meaning was not understood. He told his disciples at another time, that 'he had meat to eat, which they knew not of;'‡ not meaning, as they were ready to understand it, common food, but something of quite another nature.

Thus when our Lord talked to his disciples of suffering and dying, though such language at the first must needs alarm and afflict them, yet it was according to their notions impossible to be true in the literal sense. What then was more natural than to conclude that their Master had some hidden meaning? We have a plain instance of this in a like case. The Jews looked on a man as defiled, that had eaten with unwashed hands; but our Saviour tells the scribes and pharisees, 'not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out.'§ What words could be plainer? But the thing being so opposite to Jewish maxims and practice, the disciples no more understood how it could be, than how the Messias could suffer and die; and therefore Peter desires his Master to 'declare unto them the parable.'‖ These prepossessions continued until after the resurrection. When their Lord was

* Matth. xvi. 6. † Luke ii. 49. ‡ John iv. 32.
§ Matth. xv. 11. ‖ Ver. 15.

crucified, all their hopes died with him; and when he was risen again, it was some time before they could credit their own eyes, and be persuaded that they really beheld him. As strange as this may appear to the Considerer, I can see nothing unnatural in it.

Suppose now this account of the disciples' want of understanding to be true, it shows indeed their honesty and sincerity in reporting it fairly. But suppose (as the Considerer supposes) that it is all forged, I would fain know what policy there was in the contrivance. He says he suspects some fraudulent design in it; but what purpose was or could be served by this fraud? Did the Apostles get any thing, either honor or profit, by relating their own prejudices and hardness of belief.

But what is to be said for the chief priests? how came they to be apprehensive of a resurrection. They no more believed that Christ the king of the Jews could die and rise again, than the disciples did. Very true; but that prejudice stood not in their way, for they did not admit Jesus to be Christ. If they had, they would not have attempted to kill him. Why then did they fear his resurrection? The plain and clear answer is, because he had foretold it; for it was one thing to believe him to be a great prophet, and another to believe him to be the Christ. That this was a well known distinction amongst the Jews appears from the discourse of the two disciples going to Emmaus; who, though they had given over all hopes that Jesus was the Christ, were still firm in the persuasion that he was 'a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.'* Now the Jews had been witnesses to so many wonders and miracles wrought by him, that whether they thought him to be the Christ or no, they could not but suspect that he was a great prophet at least, and might possibly come from the grave armed with power to take vengeance of their wicked and cruel treatment of him. This was but a natural apprehension; and their fears and guilty consciences added weight to every suspicion of this kind; and they were exactly in Herod's case, who, when he heard the fame of the great miracles which Jesus performed,

* Luke xxiv. 19.

said, 'This is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead; therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.'* What is there in this that is not natural and probable?

Let us hear what the Considerer says to it: "If we take the opinion of the chief priests and pharisees from their own words, as delivered by St. Matthew, they believe Jesus was a deceiver, and appear afraid, not of his rising in the day, but of the disciples stealing him away in the night." All that the Considerer says here depends on his supposing that the chief priests and pharisees spoke their real sentiments to Pilate without any disguise; for otherwise, if they used any art, or formed a story merely as a pretence to obtain a guard to watch the sepulchre, nothing can be concluded from what they tell Pilate, but this only, that they wanted a guard to secure the sepulchre. Put the case that they were convinced of his miracles, apprised of the prophecy of his resurrection, and under a real apprehension that it might be fulfilled, and that to satisfy their doubts they wanted to get a guard; I would fain know what sort of speech to Pilate the Considerer would make for them. Would he have them say, "Sir, this person whom you crucified at our instigation was indeed a mighty prophet, and the hand of God was with him in performing many wonderful works: he said too in his lifetime that he would rise from the dead after three days, and we are very apprehensive that he will rise indeed. Let therefore the sepulchre be guarded." If these had been indeed their real sentiments, would they have told them to Pilate, after they had extorted from him the condemnation of Jesus, by representing him as a malefactor worthy of death, and as an enemy to the Roman government? Nobody can think it. They were under a necessity, whatever their private thoughts were, of carrying on the show before Pilate of treating Jesus as a deceiver, and pretending another reason than the true one for desiring a guard, viz. for fear his disciples should steal away the body. To argue therefore that the chief priests really believed all that they pretended to Pilate, is childish and ridiculous.

I have laid together the several predictions of our Lord's resurrection, and the circumstances that attended them, in

* Matth. xiv. 2.

order to show what little reason the Considerer had to suppose the chief priests intire strangers to them; on which one mistake all his reasoning against guarding and sealing the sepulchre depends. The Considerer asserts that the chief priests had no prophecy of the resurrection but what could be deduced from the sign of Jonas; and that, he says, could not be understood by them. Let us admit it, and see what the consequence will be. Is a prophecy no prophecy unless it can be understood by every body at the time it is given? If the Considerer can persuade the world of this, he will do more towards destroying the credit of prophecy than all his predecessors have done from Celsus to this time. We often find Jesus speaking to the Jews in parables, and explaining them clearly to his disciples. The case here was much the same with respect to the prophecies of the resurrection. Those to his disciples were clear; those to the scribes enigmatical, yet delivered in terms so corresponding to the event, that, when the event happened, the Jews could not doubt whether the prophecy related to it. The same may be said of that other prophecy, 'destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'* The disciples understood not this, till after Jesus was risen; but when the event had explained the terms, the prophecy was clear, and had the effect that all prophecy is meant to have, that 'when the thing comes to pass, we may believe.'

But the Considerer thinks the prophecy from the case of Jonas not only dark and unintelligible at first, but, when understood and applied to the resurrection, false in fact in two respects; I suppose he means it did not correspond to the fact foretold in two respects. Let us hear the charge.

First, "the Son of man was to lie three days and three nights in the earth; whereas Jesus lay but the time of one day and a half, that is, two nights and a day." Secondly, "the sign promised to be given was not given to those it was promised to;" that is, to that evil and adulterous geueration.

It is somewhat strange that this great writer should be content to tread the dull road of vulgar infidels and sceptics; repeating difficulties and objections that have been a thousand

* John ii. 19.

times proposed and as often confuted; but it is still more strange that they should be such as are fully considered and most clearly explained in the very book he professes to answer. How comes he to pass over all that is said in the Trial on this point? Why such an affected silence here? It would by no means have answered the Considerer's purpose, to take notice how that author has explained Christ's lying three days in the sepulchre; but I can promise the reader it will abundantly answer his trouble to consult him on this subject; and if he has any doubts or scruples in the point, he may there receive satisfaction. It may be unnecessary to add any thing to what has been already said; but that the Considerer may not think himself intirely neglected, I shall give a short answer to his objection, referring for the rest to the Trial itself.

It is well known that the Jews reckoned their time inclusive; in their computation of days the first day and the last were included in the number. From one sabbath to another they reckoned eight days, and this when the computation began at the close of the first, and ended at the very beginning of the second. And yet in this case there cannot be more than six solar days and seven nights; and consequently there is the very same deficiency of two days and a night, which the Considerer charges on the account given of Christ's resurrection. Three nights and three days, or three *νυχθήμερα*, were in common language the same as three days; they were equivalent expressions, and used the one for the other.*

St. Luke says,† the child Jesus was not circumcised until eight days were accomplished; as strong an expression, one would think, as eight days and eight nights; and yet the birth might, according to the known way of reckoning in this case, be at the close of the first, and the circumcision at the beginning of the last. Again; the words 'after three days' are very full and expressive, and how are we to understand them? The chief priests will inform us. 'Sir,' say they to Pilate,

* So forty days and forty nights, an expression often repeated in the Old Testament and the New, was the same as forty days; the first day and the last being each reckoned as a complete *νυκθήμερον*, or night and day, though only a portion of it.

† Chap. ii. 21.

'we remember that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again;' and yet their demand is that the sepulchre be guarded only 'till the third day.' He has here the authority of his own friends, the chief priests and pharisees, that 'after three days,' and 'till the third day,' are equivalent expressions, and were so used and so understood in the common language of the country. We have then the concurrent evidence of the chief priests and the disciples, and that too in a point which neither of them could mistake; unless you can suppose them not to understand the language of their own people. How the expressions, 'three days and three nights,' 'after three days,' 'on the third day,'* are to be understood,

* The Jews, it is plain, were not accurate to the letter in their reckoning of time. I shall give the reader one instance amongst many to be found in the Scriptures. It is 2 Kings xviii. 9. 10. 'And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah (which was the seventh year of Hosea, son of Elah, king of Israel,) that Salmaneser, king of Assyria, came up against Samaria and besieged it; and at the end of three years took it.' What can be stronger or more precise than this appears to be? Would the reader imagine it could mean any thing less than three years complete? And yet it is certainly not so to be understood; for after the words 'at the end of three years,' it follows immediately, 'even in the sixth year of Hezekiah (that is, in the ninth year of Hosea) Samaria was taken.' Now it is evident to sight, that if 'at the end of three years' was intended to signify three years complete, Hezekiah must have been in his seventh, and Hosea in his tenth year, when Samaria was taken.—After all, our Saviour himself is the best interpreter of his own language. In the many predictions of his resurrection the most usual expression is 'the third day;' sometimes it is 'after three days,' and once 'three days and three nights;' in which case the expression seems to be varied for no other reason than to accommodate it to the language and story of Jonas. Can it now be supposed, that speaking of the same event, he does not mean the same note of time, though the expression is a little varied? If then one of the expressions happens to be clear, the natural and rational way is to explain the rest by it. Now this expression, 'the third day,' has nothing of obscurity in it, and consequently will help us to understand the rest. I would fain know what view our Saviour could possibly have in applying these several expressions to the same event, as implying the same note of time; or what interest the Apostles could

Christ himself has expressly shown long enough before his death and resurrection: 'I do cures to day and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected;'* exactly conformable to the case of a person taken ill one day, being blooded the second, and dying the third, as stated in the Trial.

Neither Jews nor heathens of old ever objected that the resurrection fell out too soon for the prediction, or that the language of Scripture in this point was not consistent. They knew very well it was the current language of the country, and the usual method of computation. The honor of starting such objections is reserved for the wise men of this age; who, knowing little of ancient usages and customs, are perpetually from their own mistakes raising objections against the gospel, and such as the ancient and more learned infidels would have been ashamed of.

But the Considerer has another difficulty yet behind, with regard to this history of Jonas. "The prediction," he says, "was not fulfilled, because the sign promised to be given was not given to those it was promised to;" that is, to the evil and adulterous generation.

Where does the Considerer find the promise he talks of? I can see no such promise in the words referred to. Christ tells them no sign should be given but that of the prophet Jonas. What does he engage for here? That he would appear to them in person after the resurrection? There is not a word about it. The promise, if you will have it a promise, was only that he would lie three days in the sepulchre. If this was not a sign to the Jews, nothing could be a sign to them, for they had the evidence of their own eyes and of their own guards.

But this part of the gospel history the Considerer will not admit; and he thinks himself able to prove the whole a forgery. Let him speak his own sense of this matter: "that the priests

have in publishing it to the world, had they not been the common language of the country well known, and well understood by every one, as meaning one and the same thing. Such a conduct would only have exposed both master and disciples to scorn and contempt.—See Bishop Pearson's Exposition of the Creed, and Bishop Kidder's Demonstration of the Messias on this article.

* Luke xiii. 35.

and pharisees set no watch, and that even the disciples themselves were not forewarned of their Master's rising again, will more fully appear by the facts which the evangelists themselves relate."

Let us now attend to the reasons that are to support this bold undertaking. He first gives St. John's account of the care taken of the body by Nicodemus; who, together with Joseph, 'took the body of Jesus and wound it in linen cloths with the spices, and laid it in the sepulchre.'

On these facts the Considerer argues thus. He supposes, and very justly, that when the chief priests placed a guard on the sepulchre, they took care to see that the body was there; and then says, "if they saw the body, they must needs see how it was spiced, or preserved for keeping, if it was done; they could not see one without the other." It is to little purpose to dispute these circumstances; it is sufficient to show that his observation is not supported by the text he pretends to build on. St. John says, the body with the spices 'was wound up in linen clothes;' and without doubt the spices lay next the body, and were covered by the linen cloth; and the corpse bound in linen might be seen without seeing the spices. Suppose, however, that they saw the spices, and how the body was preserved for keeping; why then he says, "would they not then, being witnesses of that, have taken the soldiers back, resting contented that his disciples knew nothing of any prophecy of his rising again; and therefore could have no design under that pretence to steal away the body, and report he was risen?"

It is hard to make out the sense of this reasoning; but if it has any, it stands on these very absurd suppositions: 1. that had the disciples expected a resurrection, they would not have buried the body according to the custom of the country, with spices, but would have saved that expense as being unnecessary: 2. that this was a sufficient ground for the chief priests to conclude that the disciples expected no resurrection: 3. that they were governed in this affair merely by what they knew or believed of the sentiments of the disciples. As to the first of these suppositions, the spicing or not spicing the body could have no influence on the resurrection; and therefore the

disciples could not be determined to add or omit spices by their believing or not believing the resurrection. Had they expected fully that Jesus would rise, would that have prevented their showing the common respect to their Master, which all the country did to their dead friends? Or could the charge of spices enter into the consideration of this matter? 2. If there is no show of probability in supposing the disciples to be influenced in adding or omitting spices by their expectation of a resurrection, there could be no ground to conclude from their spicing the body that they did not expect a resurrection. 3. There is not the least intimation in the gospel that the chief priests knew the opinion of the disciples in this case, or that they would have considered it as of any weight or moment at all. They had heard of our Lord's prophecy, that he would rise again, and it filled them with great anxiety; for to his great power and wonderful works they had been witnesses. As to the disciples, they had them in contempt; and though in order to frame a plausible pretence to Pilate for having a watch for the sepulchre, they tell him of their apprehensions that the disciples might steal the body, yet there is no probability that this pretence was the true and only ground for their fear. You see now how his first demonstration against the gospel history comes out.

His second is from the behavior of Mary Magdalene and the other women. He says, "they knew to be sure that Nicodemus had laid the body in spices;" and yet Luke and Mark say they brought spices early in the morning, when the Sabbath was past, to anoint the body. And if this was the case, says he, "what need had it of more?" and so infers that St. John's account of spices used by Nicodemus, and St. Mark's and St. Luke's of the women bringing spices afterwards, cannot be reconciled.

As the Considerer pretends here to argue from facts related by the evangelists, I would ask him whence he had the fact on which all this reasoning depends. The evangelists give him no such information: nay, their account is inconsistent with it; for the women were not present when Joseph and Nicodemus bound up the body with spices, nor does it appear that they saw the body after it was bound up; if they did,

they could not see the spices which were hid by the linen winding-sheet. St. Matthew says, the women 'sat over against the sepulchre;' St. Mark, that they 'beheld where the body was laid.' Had they been concerned in preparing the body for burial, would the evangelists have separated their case from that of Joseph and Nicodemus so remarkably? Would they have ascribed the whole care of the body and the funeral to the men only, and said no more of the women than that they saw where the body was laid? These accounts plainly suppose that the women were without watching while the body was preparing, and that when it was carried out to be buried, they went after to observe the place where it was laid. St. Luke's account is more expressly so. His words are, 'the women followed after and beheld the sepulchre, and how the body was laid.' It is not, as at ver. 49. of the same chapter, *συνακολουθήσασαι*, they went in company with Joseph; but *κατακολουθήσασαι*, they followed after him. The evangelist adds, *ἐθεάσαντο τὸ μνημεῖον καὶ ὡς ἐτέθη τὸ σῶμα· ὡς* does not signify, as the Considerer understands it, *quo modo*, but *quod;* and the passage is not to be rendered *quo modo positum est*, but *quod positum* or *sepultum* est corpus;* that is, they came to the sepulchre, and saw that the body was buried.

But allowing for once that the women knew what had already been done to the body, what then? They could not but know that all was done in great haste, in a tumultuary manner. And will the Considerer pretend to say that as much had been done by Joseph and Nicodemus as was usual or necessary to be done, and that the whole ceremony was already completed? This is more than appears from the evangelists, and much more than in the nature of the thing is possible to be true.

No nation was more careful of their dead than the Jews. The body was first to be washed all over and cleaned with much care, and afterwards to be anointed. But in regard to Christ's body, there was not time before the sabbath to perform even thus much of the ceremony. When it was taken

* Instances in the New Testament are frequent, where *τίθημι* is used in this sense.

down from the cross, the evening was coming on; and it was not yet dark when it was left in the sepulchre.*

The funeral ceremony, it is plain, was not nor could already be completed. Offices of this solemn kind, especially for persons of character and distinction, were not used to be performed the moment they were dead, nor to be huddled up in so hasty and negligent a manner. Moses informs us that when Jacob was embalmed, no less than forty days were employed in the operation.† And Herodotus (whose authority perhaps the philosopher may like better) tells us that amongst the Egyptians, from whom the Jews borrowed that practice, no less than seventy days were required to complete it.‡

Joseph and Nicodemus intended, no doubt, to inter the body of Christ in a manner agreeable to the notion they had of his dignity and character. No less than a hundred pound weight of spices and perfumes were procured for this purpose; not wholly to be employed in preparing the body, as the Considerer seems to imagine, but to be burnt both before and after it was laid in the sepulchre, and to be spent in a manner well known to those who are at all acquainted with antiquity. The sepulchre in which the body was laid, was probably not that in which it was to be finally deposited. It was wrapped up with some of the spices, and laid there for present convenience only,§ because it happened to be near the place of crucifixion; and because the sabbath was so near, that it was impossible to carry it farther. The funeral ceremonies were reserved to be performed after the sabbath, had not Providence prevented it by a more wonderful event.

Whether the women were acquainted with the little that had already been done to the body is indeed nothing to the purpose. They knew where it had been deposited, and they knew probably that it was afterwards to be removed. They came therefore early in the morning to pay their last respects to it by anointing and perfuming it; a common method of showing respect to persons of dignity and distinction both living and dead.‖

* Compare Matth. xxvii. 57. with Luke xxiii. 54.
† Gen. l. 3. ‡ Herod. lib. ii. § John xix. 41. ‖ Ib. xii. 3.

What possible foundation then is there for the Considerer's absurd suggestions: "that there is no dependence on gospel history; that the evangelists contradict one another in this point; that the women had seen the body laid in spices, and that there was no occasion for more." Instead of convicting the evangelists of contradicting one another, he has only betrayed his own extreme ignorance in Scripture and antiquity; and that too in a case so common and obvious, that a man must take some pains to mistake it.

His next demonstration against St. Matthew's account of guarding the sepulchre, is from these words of the women, 'Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?'* "Which," he observes, "they would not have said if they had known it was sealed, and a guard placed." And he thinks if there was indeed a watch, it is impossible the women should be ignorant of it. I have considered the account given by the evangelists, and cannot see the least foundation for these imaginations. The body was laid in the sepulchre in the evening of Friday; the women went from thence and bought spices, and on the sabbath (or Saturday) they rested without stirring from home.† On the sabbath (while the women were confined at home) the guards were placed. Early the next morning the women go directly from home to the sepulchre, expecting to find it as they left it, with a stone at the mouth too large and heavy for them to move; and therefore they say, 'Who shall roll away the stone?' The Considerer says, "if these things (that is placing a guard, &c.) had been done, how is it possible but they must have known them?" I cannot apprehend how it was possible they should know them. I suppose he does not imagine that either the Roman governor or the chief priests thought it necessary to inform these poor women what they were doing. But he thinks so public an action must needs come to their knowlege. Who should carry it to them? It was the sabbath day, when others, as well as they, staid at home; for which reason it is very probable that this action was not publicly known on that day.

The Considerer goes on: "besides, nothing could be hid from the disciples; St. Matthew knew what the chief priests

* Mark xvi. 3. † Luke xxiii. 56.

and rulers said in their privy council." How does this appear? Why St. Matthew ten or more years afterwards, when the secret was divulged, relates what the chief priests did in council; and from thence he infers that St. Matthew knew every thing done in council at the time of doing it. I am quite ashamed to spend my own and readers' time thus impertinently.

"But why do these evangelists tell different stories?" What does the Considerer mean? St. Matthew alone tells the story of guarding the sepulchre. The rest are quite silent in that point, but say nothing that is inconsistent with it. How then do they differ? Is it not the most usual thing in the world for historians, in reporting the same fact, to relate some of them more, and some fewer circumstances, that attended it? and did ever any man of common sense charge them with inconsistency on that account? Suppose that in telling the story of Edward II. one historian should conclude with saying that he resigned the crown; and another should be more particular, and give an account of a deputation sent to him in form to take his resignation; would the Considerer question the truth of the principal fact, that he resigned the crown? The case is the same here. The principal facts, the death, the burial, the resurrection of Christ, are attested by all the evangelists. In the circumstances of the history some relate more, some fewer; does this invalidate their testimony in reporting the principal facts, in which they intirely agree?

The account given by St. Matthew, of guarding and sealing the sepulchre, is a very material circumstance, and was particularly so to the Jews; who had by this means of their own contrivance the most evident demonstration of the only sign intended them, the sign of the prophet Jonas. Our Lord told them that they should have this sign, and should know that the Son of man was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Had they been contented with seeing him crucified and buried, and concerned themselves no farther, I know not how they would have had the evidence of his being three days in the earth. But by the secret working of Providence, they themselves furnish out the evidence. They guard the sepulchre, and their own guards report that it was by irresistible power from above opened, and the prisoner released on the third day.

St. Matthew, by the concurrent testimony of all antiquity, wrote his gospel for the use of the Hebrews particularly; and this story of guarding the sepulchre, being an evidence of the completion of a prophecy given to that nation in particular, seems to be the reason why he relates it so punctually. Whoever will read St. Matthew's gospel, and compare it attentively with other gospels, will see so many internal marks to confirm the report of antiquity that he wrote for the use of his countrymen, that he will have little reason to doubt it. And since one evangelist only has mentioned this circumstance of guarding the sepulchre, how providential was it that we have the account in that gospel, which was written for the Jews particularly! When this gospel was published, there were thousands living in that country who knew and could inform others of the circumstances reported by St. Matthew; and is it credible that St. Matthew would have published this account in Judea itself, where, if false, it must undoubtedly have been detected? If this story had appeared first in a history published among the heathens at a great distance from Judea, the infidels would have triumphed and told us that the historian took the advantage of telling the people a strange story, but took care to lay the scene of it at a place where it was not likely they should send to make inquiries. We should then have been asked why the story was not told in the gospel intended for the use of the Jews particularly, who had proper means to examine the truth of it. Well then; the story happily was published in Judea itself, and being found in St. Matthew's gospel, is an appeal to the whole nation of the Jews for the truth of the fact, and probably made whilst many were living who were concerned in the transaction.

That St. Matthew reports this story, and the other evangelists omit it, is not a singular case. St. Matthew's view in writing for the Jews shows itself in other like instances. The massacre of the infants by Herod is reported by St. Matthew only, and for the same reason; because it was a fact of peculiar moment to the Jews, as it showed the sense of the nation in expecting the Messiah at the very time when Christ was born, as it was the completion of a prophecy set forth in their own scriptures, and as it was a fact that happened at their own door, in which they could not be imposed on.

For a like reason St. Matthew quotes many prophecies, and applies them to the Messias in a way well known and understood by the Jews, but in a way unknown to the Gentiles, and therefore they appear not in the other gospels.

So again the genealogies of Christ in St. Luke and St. Matthew appear at first sight to be very different, but are intirely reconcileable by considering for whose use the two gospels were intended; St. Matthew's for the Jews; St. Luke's for the Gentiles. There were two ways of reckoning descents among the Jews, one of them common to them and other nations, by the course of descent from father to son; the other was by the legal descent established in their law; according to which, if an elder brother died without issue, and left a widow, the next brother was to take her to wife; and their first-born son was in law the son of the eldest brother, and succeeded to his estate. It is manifest that these genealogies must meet in the common ancestor, for brothers' children have the same grandfather. Now St. Luke, writing to the Gentiles, deduces the genealogy of Christ in the way understood by them, *secundum jus sanguinis.* St. Matthew, writing to the Jews, follows the method by which the right of succession was governed among the Jews, and draws out the genealogy according to the legal descent. These instances, and many others that might be given, show how little weight there is in objecting against a piece of history, because it appears but in one, or sometimes but in two of the four evangelists.

At page 28, &c. of the third edit. and 37, &c. of the first, the Considerer spends a great deal of paper and pains to confute some imaginations, in which nobody is concerned but himself. He takes it for granted that the Jews, to account for their guarding the sepulchre, must act on one or other of these persuasions; they must either be fully satisfied that Christ would rise again, and then he says it was to no purpose to guard the sepulchre in order to prevent it; or they must be fully satisfied that he would not rise again, and then there was no reason, he says, to be apprehensive of a fraudulent resurrection. It is hardly possible that either of these should be their real case. They were anxious and solicitous about this event; alarmed and confounded with recollecting his miracles, and the prophe-

cies of his rising from the dead; unable to satisfy their own doubts, or to calm the misgivings of their own minds. Sometimes they imagined that possibly he might rise; sometimes perhaps that the disciples might secrete the body, and tell the people strange stories. How to extricate themselves they knew not; and therefore they apply to Pilate for a guard, in hopes of finding some relief in their distress, as men in distress are ready to take any thing for a remedy. But that they had as much leisure and as much cool infidelity as the Considerer had when he argued their cause for them, is utterly incredible; and were they to give an account for themselves, they would hardly plead their own cause as this wise advocate, without attending to the situation they were in, has done for them.

The conduct of the Jewish rulers, with regard to our Saviour, was the more likely to be wrong, because they judged and acted on wrong maxims. They were so possessed with the expectation of a Messiah with temporal power, that no reason could persuade them that Christ was the person who pretended to no such power; and on this notion they were so resolutely determined to oppose his pretensions, that no evidence could convince them that his claims were just. The people however were not so insensible as their leaders; convinced by his wonders, and engaged by the many acts of benevolence he daily did, they followed him in great numbers. The governors, concerned and enraged to see the people thus deluded, as they called it, by a pretender, determined to put an end to his pretensions by putting an end to his life. Accordingly they had him apprehended, accused of blasphemy against God, and treason against Cæsar, and publicly executed. But the danger was not yet over. He prophecied in his lifetime that he should rise again in three days, and we have shown before that they had now reason to be alarmed at this prophecy. The works done in his life, compared with the amazing scene that was opened at his death, must needs fill them with doubts and fears. They could not tell but some extraordinary power might possibly exert itself in behalf of one at whose agonies all nature seemed to sympathise; or if after all he should prove to be an impostor, they imagined, or pretended to imagine,

that the disciples might take advantage of this situation of things, and contrive to carry on the cheat; that they might possibly remove the body out of sight, and give out that the prophecy was fulfilled. Thus the delusions of the people, though checked awhile by his death, might break out afresh, and become more rivetted and confirmed by a supposed resurrection; and so the last error be worse than the first. To quiet their own minds therefore, and to be fully satisfied about the event, a guard of soldiers is placed at the sepulchre. But on the third day they are frightened from their post by an angel and an earthquake, fly into the city, and make their report to the chief priests. The chief priests well knew what effect this report would naturally have on the minds of the people, if fairly made; to prevent which they resolve in the first place to publish a story of their own; and therefore, with a rich bribe in hand, and a full assurance of indemnity, they prevail with the watch to be silent as to what they had seen at the sepulchre, and to give out that the disciples stole away the body whilst they were asleep.

But to justify the credit of this piece of history, we must, it seems, answer all the imaginations of the Considerer; who has given his judgment on the part acted by the guards and the chief priests, and is of opinion that neither of them could do what the history ascribes to them. He has summed up his reasoning thus: "it is amazing that the guard at the sepulchre should be terrified almost to death with astonishing wonders, and the high priests and rulers believe them, yet these things should have no more effect on them than if they had not believed them."

Little dealers in history and politics are never more contemptible than when they attempt to assign reasons for or against plain facts reported by writers of credit. The actions of a great general have been sometimes called in question, because a little smatterer in military affairs conceives the schemes not to have been well laid or not well conducted; and then full of his own wisdom he says, could any great general act so? On the strength of which reasoning he concludes the history to be false. There are two small faults in this way of arguing; first, that he who reasons so, takes it for granted that he is able to judge wisely in the case himself, which often

happens to be otherwise: scondly, that men in all cases act wisely and reasonably, which seldom is the case.

But let us hear, in the first place, what the Considerer has to say for the guards.

"It is strange, unaccountably strange, that those soldiers, who were just now almost struck dead with terror, should lose the impressions so easily and so soon, which it had made on them, which just before scarce left them power to fly from the deadly fright which an earthquake and an angel had put them in! that for money they should all agree together to list themselves in the priests' service to fight against God, when by so doing they might expect some heavy judgment to fall on them; but by affirming the truth boldly, conceive reasonable hopes of being captains in the Messiah's victorious army, which was to conquer all nations."

Let us now consider the grounds on which he builds. He supposes these common soldiers, who were heathens, and bred up to despise the religion of the Jews above all others, to be persuaded that when they took a bribe of the chief priests, "they listed themselves to fight against God, and that they might expect some heavy judgment;" and that by acting otherwise "they might have reasonable hopes of being captains in the Messiah's victorious army," which was to conquer all nations. How comes the Considerer to furnish the soldiers with these sentiments? Does he imagine that a fright would make them forget all the religion of their own country at once, and turn Jews, and firm believers in the God of the Jews? and that it would give them the same opinion of the Messiah which the Jews had, and make them think Jesus to be the Messiah, and fill them with expectation of employments under him? Nothing surely can be more out of character. But however they were terrified; and the Considerer thinks it strange they should lose the impression so easily and so soon. What impression does he mean? If he means the sentiments which he has ascribed to them, I am persuaded they did not lose them, for they never had them. The Roman soldiers very probably knew nothing more than that they were appointed to watch the sepulchre that the body might not be removed; and that they were acquainted with the character and pretensions of the person lying in the grave, there is not the least reason to sus-

pect; much less had they any expectation of being disturbed by invisible powers; and when they were disturbed, what probability is there in making them reason immediately like Jews, and to think of God and his Messiah as if they had been his disciples? But suppose them (if you please) to have some tincture of religion; suppose too they believed with the centurion at the crucifixion that Christ was indeed a righteous man, and yet farther, that he was particularly favored of the gods; what is all this to the purpose? If he was a favorite of the gods, it was the gods of his own country, with whom they imagined they had nothing to do. They had gods of their own, to whom they were bound, and whom they served, if they served any gods at all. As to the Jewish religion, if they thought any thing of it, they thought with the rest of the heathens that it was the worst of superstitions. It remains then only that the soldiers were scared and terrified by a surprising sight. And where is the wonder that when the fright was over, they should be what they were before, mere common soldiers, and ready to take money, which was to be earned at so cheap a rate, as reporting a story made for them by the chief priests? It was all one to them who moved the body; they were unaffected with the consequences that alarmed the chief priests; and I dare say ready money outweighed all hopes the Considerer has given them, of getting commissions under the Jewish Messiah.

In the next place he undertakes the cause of the chief priests, and to prove that the part assigned to them in the gospel history is a weak one and a wicked one; and thence he concludes they neither did nor could act that part, and that the account of it is forged. The first part of his task is indeed an easy one; for the chief priests acted very foolishly and very wickedly; but I am in some pain for his consequence. Will he maintain that no men act wickedly or weakly? or though many do, yet the chief priests never did or could? I doubt he will be at a full stop here. Bet let us hear him. "The priests," he says, "as well as the people were credulous of miracles, being nursed up in the belief of them, which when attested by their own party, persons whose veracity they could depend on, (not the flying reports of a giddy mob,) must have prevented them from doing what it is here pretended they did."

But why should the chief priests be more affected by miracles, attested by their own party, that is, the guards, than by those which they saw themselves? Many such there were; some of them I have already mentioned; but how were they affected by them? Did they not seek the life of Jesus for raising Lazarus, and the life of Lazarus that he might not live a witness of the power of Jesus? Did they not admit the miracles, and yet ascribe them to the power of Beelzebub? And might they not with the same reason ascribe all the guards reported to be done at the sepulchre to the same power?

If it be sufficient to set aside the authority of the gospel, because it represents the chief priests acting unreasonably, the same argument will be too hard for the credit of all the histories in being; for they all show us men acting with great folly and great wickedness. The Old Testament must doubtless follow the New; for what is more unreasonable than the behavior of the ancient Jews after their wonderful deliverance from Egypt? May not the Considerer say, had God so visibly interposed for their deliverance, it is impossible they should rebel so soon as the history says they did; and therefore the history must be false? But I leave this, to consider a complaint of a much higher nature.

The angel, it seems, who was the minister of God, and acted as by him directed, did "very impoliticly in frightening away the watch, before Jesus came out of the sepulchre, so that they could not be witnesses of his resurrection." How he knows that the watch was terrified before Jesus came out of the sepulchre, I cannot tell; he learns it not from the gospel. The angel moved the stone for the sake of those who came to the sepulchre, that they might see and report what they saw; our Lord certainly wanted not their help. But why were the angels impolitic? Were they to govern themselves by the politics of the chief priests, and follow their measures? Had God or the angels by his direction appointed the watch to be witnesses of the resurrection, and they had been scared away before the time, the objection would have laid; but how was God bound to give this evidence to the guards? Was it because the chief priests had set the watch? But what right had they to prescribe to God who should be eye-witnesses of his Son's resurrection? The setting of the watch and what followed was suf-

ficient to convince the Jews that Jesus, according to his own prophecy, was three days in the heart of the earth, and then released. This evidence rose providentially out of their own contrivance, to watch the body; but their contrivance laid no obligation on God, nor could it hasten or retard the resurrection, or have any effect on the manner of it. We find in the gospel, that very particular care was taken by our Lord to appoint chosen witnesses of the resurrection. To them he showed himself alive after the resurrection; to them were given powers from on high to confirm this evidence; but where does the Considerer read that it was referred to the high priests, or that they had any right to appoint witnesses in this case? If they had no right to appoint them, no injury was done in not admitting them. And yet after all, though the Considerer thinks the guards did not see enough, they saw so much as to make their report of great weight, had there not been an incorrigible obstinacy in the Jewish rulers; enough to awaken their attention, and to call to their remembrance the sign of Jonas, which was to be given them; enough to raise serious reflexions on all the miracles of Jesus, of which they had themselves been eye-witnesses.

SECTION III.

We come now to consider the inconsistencies which the Considerer charges on the evangelists in the account they give of the circumstances of the resurrection. One would imagine this gentleman had never read any piece of history reported by different writers, or any trial whose facts are proved by many witnesses; otherwise he would not have objected to the relations of the evangelists, merely because some mention circumstances omitted by others, though all agree in the principal facts to be proved; and all the circumstances, though all not mentioned by each writer, are perfectly consistent. For this is the case of all historians, who treat of the same facts; and I am persuaded that, had the gospel accounts with all their varieties related to any matter of civil history, and been published under the name of any Grecian or Roman historians, these different relations, instead of being thought matter of objection, would have been considered as confirming and establishing each the other. Such differences among reporters of the same

fact, will always be found from the very nature of things; for all facts being attended with many circumstances, and all of them not of equal importance, historians according to their different judgments choose to report some more, some fewer of those circumstances. This, I say, must be the common case, where historians write without regard to each other; but it must necessarily be so where a later historian publishes an account on purpose to supply the defects or omissions of those before him; for then his very design is to add such things or circumstances as the others had either totally neglected or imperfectly related.

The four gospels were not published at the same time, nor can the precise date of the publication of each of them be ascertained. St. Matthew by the general consent of antiquity is taken to be first, and to have been published not many years after our Saviour's crucifixion. St. Mark and St. Luke came next in order. After all, and long after all, came St. John's gospel, published in an extreme old age, and not above a year

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* St. Matt. chap. xxviii.

1. In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre.

2. And behold there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

3. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

St. Mark, chap. xvi.

1. And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had brought spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4. And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

before his death. His intention was, as all antiquity bears witness, to complete the history of our Saviour, by adding what the other evangelists had omitted, and enlarging what they had concisely related.

This being the state of the history, as contained in the four gospels, the true way of examining it is, to consider the accounts given by the three first evangelists separately, (as being the accounts which lay before St. John when he wrote his gospel,) and then to compare them with St. John, by which means we shall see what he left as he found it, and as wanting no addition or explanation, and also what additions or explanations he thought proper to insert; and so be able to judge on the whole, whether the history be consistent with itself.

In order to give the reader the light which I think will arise from this method, I will lay before him the account of the three evangelists of what passed at the sepulchre, and then consider what the difference between them is; and lastly compare them with St. John's account, and consider how the difference will then stand on the foot of the additions or explications given by him.*

St. Luke, chap. xxiv.

1. Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

2. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

St. Matt. chap. xxviii.

5. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word.

9. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

St. Mark, chap xvi.

5. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

6. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

8. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

9. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

10. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

St. Luke, Chap. xxiv.

5. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6. He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7. Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8. And they remembered his words,

9. And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the Apostles.

11. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himmself at that which was come to pass.

You see St. Matthew is the only one who mentions the earthquake, and the angels descending to roll away the stone. As the rest say nothing of it, it is very absurd to say, as the Considerer does, that they contradict it. I shall only therefore observe on this part, that our English translation is not exact; for after relating the coming of the women to the sepulchre, it follows, 'and behold there was a great earthquake,' &c. which may lead the reader to imagine that the earthquake happened whilst the women were at the sepulchre; which it did not. St. Matthew was to account for the women's finding the stone rolled, and therefore inserts what happened just before their coming; and his words should be rendered, 'and behold there had been an earthquake,' &c.

If you compare these three evangelists together in other respects, the difference between them will lie in these particulars.

1. St. Mark and St. Luke say, the women came early to the sepulchre, bringing spices to anoint the body; St. Matthew says they came early to the sepulchre, but says nothing of their bringing spices.

2. St. Matthew says, the two Marys came to the sepulchre; St. Mark, the two Marys and Salome; St. Luke says, the women who came from Galilee with him, and he tells us, verse 11. that they were the two Marys, Joanna, and other women with them.

3. The three evangelists agree that the women saw a vision; St. Matthew says, an angel; St. Mark, a young man; St. Luke, two men, whom verse 23. he calls two angels.

4. St. Matthew and St. Mark agree in the message sent by the angels to the disciples, that he would go before them into Galilee. St. Luke does not mention this message expressly, but that the angels remind the women of what Jesus had said, being with them in Galilee, of his death and resurrection.

These differences cannot be accounted for by any thing added in the gospel of St. John; and therefore I shall postpone the consideration of them for the sake of pursuing the view before me.

The next and most material difference occurs in the account given of our Lord's appearing to Mary Magdalene. St.

Matthew says that as the women went from the sepulchre to carry the message to the disciples, Jesus met them, and gave them another message to the disciples. St. Mark, after concluding the account of what passed at the sepulchre says, 'Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene.' He does not mention this as part of what happened at the sepulchre, but as a new and distinct account of itself. St. Luke gives no account of our Lord's appearing to Mary.

These accounts considered together, the case will stand thus: stop at St. Matthew's account of what passed at the sepulchre, to the women's going with the angels' message to the disciples, which ends with ver. 8. and take St. Mark's account without tacking to it the separate relation of the appearance to Mary Magdalene, (which is indeed no part of the account as given by St. Mark of what happened at the sepulchre,) and then the three accounts are (excepting the small variations before mentioned, and hereafter to be accounted for) perfectly consistent.

The difficulty then remaining is to account for St. Luke's saying nothing of this appearance; for St. Mark's speaking of it as distinct from what happened at the sepulchre; for St. Matthew's placing it before he had accounted for the delivery of the first message, and adding a second message of like import from Christ himself.

The difficulty with respect to St. Luke is not great; he has omitted the appearance, for it came not within the compass of what he proposed to relate, as will appear presently. Neither are St. Matthew and St. Mark, who relate this appearance, at variance. They agree in the appearance, agree that it was early on the first day of the week; St. Matthew says, it was 'as they went to tell the disciples;' and so it might be consistently with St. Mark, for he has said nothing to the contrary. Thus the case would stand, had we only the history as given by these three evangelists.

When St. John wrote his gospel, he had reason to enlarge the account given of what passed at the sepulchre, for the sake of adding his own testimony, who had been himself an eye-witness; which testimony the other evangelists had omitted. Compare St. John and St. Luke together, and St. John plainly

carries on the account where St. Luke left it. St. Luke relates how the women went to the sepulchre, saw angels, received a message to the disciples; that they delivered the message, and that Peter on hearing it went away to the sepulchre, and found every thing to answer the relation. Now St. John went and was a witness of these things as well as Peter; he leaves therefore St. Luke's account (which was exact as to what happened before Peter went) as he found it; and carries it on by beginning with a clear and distinct account of his own going with Peter to the sepulchre. To introduce this account he says: 'the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and the other disciple whom Jesus loved,'* &c. He then gives an account of what he and St. Peter observed of the state of the sepulchre. It appears at ver. 11. that Mary returned to the sepulchre, and staid there after him; that she saw again a vision of angels, and saw Jesus himself, who gave her a message to deliver to the disciples.

Let us see now how their accounts will correspond together.

1. It is manifest that Mary went twice to the sepulchre.

2. That St. John gives no other account of what passed at her first being there, except that she found the stone taken away from the sepulchre, and this only as introductive to what he had to add farther.

3. That the story of her first going, and what related to it, ended at the relation she made of what she had seen to Peter and John.

4. That the appearance of Jesus to her, and the message given to her, was at her second being at the sepulchre.

It comes out from these lights given by St. John:

First, that St. Luke's account related only to what happened at Mary's first going to the sepulchre; for it ends at St. Peter's setting out to view the sepulchre, where St. John begins.

Secondly, since St. Luke's account agrees with St. Matthew's and St. Mark's, in relating what passed at the sepulchre, it

* John xx. 1. 2.

follows that their accounts are relations of what passed only at Mary's first coming, that is, St. Matthew's account to ver. 8. inclusive, and St. Mark's to ver. 8. inclusive.

Thirdly, St. John having informed us that Christ appeared to Mary, and delivered his message to her at her second coming to the sepulchre, it follows that what St. Matthew says ver. 9. 10. and St. Mark ver. 9. 10. 11. happened at her second coming to the sepulchre.

Thus St. John's additional account has given us a clear order of the whole transaction. And it appears that St. Luke considered the women merely as messengers of the news to the disciples; and as soon as the message was delivered, and the disciples made acquainted with it, he prosecutes their story no farther. St. Mark in like manner, but adds the appearance to Mary as a distinct and separate thing by itself.

St. Matthew has given an account of what happened at the first going to the sepulchre, and has also mentioned the appearance to Mary, which he has connected to the former account as part (and so indeed it was) of the same transaction. Had he mentioned this appearance, as St. Mark has mentioned it, without making any connexion between the appearance and the story of the first visit to the sepulchre, there had been no difficulty in this part of the case.

The difficulty there now is, arises from the manner in which St. Matthew connects these two parts together; he says that Jesus appeared to the women 'as they went to tell the disciples:' St. John's account is, that he appeared to Mary after she had delivered the message (not to the disciples, but) to himself and Peter, and had returned a second time to the sepulchre.

I believe there are very few histories in the world where difficulties of this sort, were they nicely inquired into, do not frequently occur. Writers of history, to make one thread of story, lay hold of any circumstances to make a transition from one fact to another. A little agreement of the facts in place or time often serves; and we read in or near the same place, or about the same time such and such things happened; in which exactness is not intended or expected. And had we

nothing else to say on the present difficulty, it would be sufficient with reasonable men.

But as this seeming disagreement has been so strongly insisted on, I desire the reader to consider the following observations.

1. St. Matthew's account may very well consist with St. John's. St. Matthew does not say the women had delivered no message to the disciples, nor does St. John say they had delivered it to any but to himself and Peter. Consider then; the women who received the message from the angel at their first going to the sepulchre could not deliver it to the disciples all at once; for it is not to be supposed that they were all together so early in the morning: for which reason the women probably divided themselves, and some went to some of the disciples, and some to others; and that Mary Magdalene, and whoever else attended her, went in the first place to Peter and John to inform them, intending to go to others with like notice. But when they found that Peter and John went directly to the sepulchre, they did, as it was extremely natural for them to do, go after them, to see the sepulchre, which they had left in fear, but very desirous to view it again in company of the men, intending soon to return and deliver the message to the other disciples. On this case it is evident they returned to the sepulchre before they had delivered their message, as they were required to do, to the disciples; and St. Matthew might very well consider the appearance of Jesus as happening whilst they were employed in carrying the first message. And this accounts likewise for our Saviour's giving them a second message, much to the same purpose and import as the first.

2. There is no reason to think that St. Matthew's words are to be taken so strictly as to limit the appearance of Jesus to the women, to the very moment in which they passed from the sepulchre with the first message to the disciples.

1. Because there could not, from the first going to the sepulchre to the end of the whole account, including the appearance to Mary, be more than an hour at most employed; and facts crowded so close together are scarcely ever reported under different dates.

2. Because St. Matthew, throwing the whole transaction into one continued story, would naturally consider no more than the general order in which things happened, without distinguishing the short time which the whole took up into different periods.

3. Because the language used by St. Matthew does really import no more than the general order in which things happened: he says, *ὡς ἐπορεύοντο ἀπαγγεῖλαι*, 'as they were going to tell.' You have at verse 11. the very same way of speaking, *πορευομένων δὲ αὐτῶν*. It is the very same note of time; for he speaks of the women's going with the message, and says, 'now when they (the women) were going, behold the watch came into the city, and showed the chief priests all the things that were done.' Can any one suppose that the evangelist means more than that the watch went to the city about the same time that the women went to the disciples? Or if it could possibly appear that the watch were really a quarter of an hour sooner or later than the women, would this, in the opinion of any man living, impeach the credit of the historian? If any person desires more instances of these transitions, they occur frequently in St. Matthew and in other writers of the New Testament.

As to the order in which we have placed the transactions at the sepulchre, by comparison of the four evangelists together, it is confirmed and established beyond all doubt by the account which the two disciples going to Emmaus give our Saviour. This, say they, is the third day since the crucifixion; 'yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not.'* Compare this with St. Luke's own account, and St. John's as far as it relates to what himself and Peter did at the sepulchre, and you will find the facts reported in the same order. These

* Luke xxiv. 21. &c.

two disciples left Jerusalem as soon as Peter and John had made their report, and before Mary Magdalene had reported the appearance of Christ to her, or had delivered his message to the disciples; which proves that the account as it stands in St. Matthew, including the appearance to Mary Magdalene, was not told to the disciples at once, but must be accounted for in the manner above-mentioned; otherwise these two disciples must have known of the appearance of Christ, as well as of the other circumstances prior to it, which they so punctually relate.

You see here plainly that the two disciples, speaking of the first visit the women made to the sepulchre, say, 'they found not his body;' and thence the Considerer infers they never saw him; expressly contrary to the account given by St. John of their second visit to the sepulchre. And for want of observing the series of the story, he goes on mistaking and confounding the circumstances which belong to the first and the second visit to the sepulchre, and triumphs in discovering contradictions in the evangelists; whereas, in truth, the only thing he has discovered is, that he does not understand them.

In stating thus the series and order of what passed at the sepulchre, there is one difficulty only to be accounted for; namely, St. John speaks of the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene only; St. Matthew speaks of it as made to more than one; and St. Mark says that Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which may be thought not to agree with St. Matthew's account.

Now though St. John speaks only of Mary Magdalene, she being the principal person; and it being not at all necessary to his purpose to mention more (for a message delivered by her accounts as well for his going to the sepulchre as if it had been delivered by twenty); yet if you consider what Mary Magdalene says herself, it will appear that she was not alone. Her words are, 'they have taken the Lord out of the sepulchre, and *we* know not where they have laid him.' *We* imports that she had others with her at delivering this message; and if she had, it cannot be supposed that they left her to go alone to the sepulchre when she followed Peter and John, or permitted

her to stay behind them alone at the sepulchre. Consequently the appearance was to Mary Magdalene when others were with her, though she only is mentioned by St. John throughout his account.

As to St. Mark, he says, 'Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene.' His meaning is that the first appearance he made was to her; but that it was to her only he does not say. And it is manifest that the word *first* (πρῶτον) relates to the order of appearances; for it follows, ver. 12. *after that* he appeared in another form to two of them, and ver. 14. *afterward* he appeared unto the eleven. The first appearance then was certainly to Mary Magdalene; but whether to her alone depends on a careful comparison of the evangelists together. And on the whole I think the account here given seems to me to be the most probable; which I would be understood to say, without prejudice to other interpretations which many worthy and learned writers have followed.

But let us now look back to the variations between the three first evangelists, which we passed over before.

1. The first is, that St. Mark and St. Luke say, 'the women came early to the sepulchre bringing spices;' St. Matthew says nothing of their bringing spices.

It gives light to any piece of history to show the motives of the principal actions recorded; but where the fact itself is the only material thing, such circumstances may or may not be added, as the historian pleases. In the present case the fact itself, that the women were early at the sepulchre, saw the stone rolled away, and the body not there, are the only material things in the narration. And whether they came early to the sepulchre, for one reason or for another, is of little consequence; and is in the discretion of the writer to add or omit the reason as he pleases, without prejudice to the history, which depends on the truth of the fact only. St. Matthew has said nothing to intimate that they did not bring spices, nor has he assigned any other reason for their coming; and the Considerer excepted, I believe no man can discern any contrariety in the accounts.

2. The second is, that St. Matthew says the two Marys came to the sepulchre; St. Mark, the two Marys and Salome;

St. Luke, the women who came from Galilee, and he reckons, ver. 11. the two Marys, Joanna, and other women with them.

The three evangelists agree in naming the two Marys as the principal persons concerned; some of them mention others as being in their company. And this is a variation which I believe happens in every part of story reported by different writers, and is no discredit to any. Suppose that three news-writers should give an account of opening a sessions of parliament. The first should say, "the king, attended by the prince, came to parliament:" the second, "the king, attended by the prince and the duke:" the third, "the king, attended by the prince, the duke, and the principal officers of state:" would any man living imagine he saw contradictions in these accounts? Why then is the gospel suspected in a case where no other history in the world would be suspected?

3. The same answer may be applied to the third variation, as far as it relates to the number of angels seen. The mentioning one was sufficient to answer all the purposes of the history; and he who says there were two, does not contradict him who mentions one, unless he has said there was but one, which none of the evangelists has said.

The Considerer thinks there is no harmony among the evangelists, because some speak of the women seeing angels, others call them men. He might have said St. Luke contradicts himself; for he calls them both men and angels in different parts of his relation. The truth is, the angels are sometimes called men because they appeared in the form of men; for the same reason that Abraham called the angels men, who appeared to him on the plains of Mamre.

4. St. Matthew and St. Mark agree in the message sent by the angels to the disciples, that he would 'go before them into Galilee.' St. Luke has not expressly mentioned the message, but has said nothing inconsistent with it. The angels tell the women, 'He is not here; he is risen; remember how he spake unto you;' exactly agreeable to St. Matthew's account: 'He is not here; he is risen, as he said.' As soon as the women had received this information from the angels, he says they went and told the disciples; and so says St. Matthew. The message then, as delivered by the angels, and whatever else

happened at the sepulchre at the first visit made by the women, stands clear of all difficulties.

But it may be proper here to take notice of the second message given by our Saviour himself, and mentioned by St. Matthew and St. John. St. Matthew gives the second message in the same words with the first: 'Tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.' St. John says, tell them 'I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.' It is very probable that the words in St. Matthew and those in St. John are parts of the same message; and St. John, finding the first part reported by the evangelists before him, left it as he found it, adding only the second part. As the first message imported no more than that they should see him again before he left them, and plainly intimated that the time was come to take leave of them (otherwise what occasion was there to appoint this meeting merely to see him, if he was to continue with them?)—this being, I say, the case, the other evangelists mention the first part of the message as including the whole; St. John adds the latter part to explain and ascertain the meaning. The whole message then will stand thus: "Go, tell my disciples to go into Galilee; there they shall see me before I leave this world, and ascend to my Father and your Father," &c. Is not this message all of a piece? Does not one part imply and infer the other? If the Considerer can think otherwise, he has a greater talent (and indeed I think he has) of raising contradictions than any philosopher, either moral or immoral, ever had before him.

The Considerer has farther difficulties still. "By St. Luke," he says, "it appears that the men were at the sepulchre after the angels were gone; but by St. John, that they were there before the angels came. Therefore either the men did not see the angels, or the witnesses do not agree in their evidence about it." What a work is here about nothing! Who told him the men did see the angels? It is manifest they did not. The first appearance of angels was before Peter and John came; the second was after they were gone. But the Considerer wants a reason to be given why the angels withdrew, as he expresses it, on the men's coming? He may as well inquire why they

are withdrawn now. If God thought proper to inform the women of the resurrection by an appearance of angels, and not the men, he had his reasons, and wise ones doubtless, though the Considerer cannot see them.

But we have not yet done: St. Matthew reports that Mary 'held Jesus by the feet, and worshipped him;' St. John, that Jesus said to her, 'touch me not.' Here the Considerer is puzzled again; but what offends him I cannot imagine. If Mary had not laid hold of Jesus's feet, he could have had no occasion to say, 'touch me not.' These words therefore in St. John suppose the case to have been as represented by St. Matthew; and yet the Considerer cannot or will not see it.

From the words, 'touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father,' a suspicion had been raised by Woolston that Christ's body was not a real tangible body; and the author of the Trial had exposed and confuted so weak and groundless a suggestion. "It could not, as he had proved, be inferred from the words, 'touch me not;' for thousands say it every day, without giving the least suspicion that their bodies are not capable of being touched: nor from the words 'I am not yet ascended to my Father;' for though there is a difficulty in these words, there is no difficulty in seeing that they have no relation to Christ's body, for of his body nothing is said." And what says the Considerer? Why, if the words 'touch me not,' says he, did not signify 'touch not my body,' what did they signify? The author of the Trial, you see, had said that these words, 'I am not ascended to my Father,' had no relation to Christ's body, and the Considerer represents him as saying that the words 'touch me not' had no relation to it. This is the Considerer's method of answering books; because he finds it difficult to answer what the author has said, he is resolved to confute what he has not said.

The next appearance of Christ was on the day of the resurrection, to two disciples in their road to Emmaus. St. Mark has just mentioned this story;* but we are indebted to St. Luke for the particulars of it.† One of the two, St. Luke

* Chap. xvi. 12. † Chap. xxiv. 13. &c.

tells us, was Cleophas; and the other, if we may believe the Considerer, was Simon Peter. Who it really was is of little importance in itself; that it was not Simon Peter, whatever he thinks of the matter, is most evident. Had Peter been present, it is not likely that an inferior disciple would have been the principal spokesman; especially when a part of the conversation turned on Peter himself. It is the less likely, because St. Peter was probably then at Jerusalem, where the same evangelist informs us the eleven were gathered together.* But to put the matter out of all doubt, when the two disciples returned from Emmaus to the Apostles at Jerusalem, they found them discoursing about an appearance of Christ to Simon Peter; 'the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.'† I desire to know what appearance the evangelist means here? Is it that to the two disciples in the road to Emmaus? Impossible. These disciples had not yet made their report; and it will be too much for the Considerer to say that the eleven knew it by inspiration.

If the reader is desirous to know how the Considerer came by this notion, I think I can inform him. It is founded, if I mistake not, on this very passage, 'the Lord is risen, and hath appeared to Simon,' which proves the direct contrary. Had the Considerer argued that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, therefore Simon Peter was the companion of Cleophas, it would have been much more excusable; because though it would not have proved his conclusion to be true, it would not, as this text does, prove it to be false. The Considerer supposes that to be a report of the two disciples to the eleven, which was in fact a report of the eleven to them, viz. that 'the Lord was risen and had appeared to Simon.' Insensible of this blunder, evident as it is, he goes on, and raises this very wise reflexion on it, that it "seems as if it did not appear to be the Lord to Cleophas, but to Simon only;" an inference impertinent enough, had his construction of the passage been right; but what can be said of it, when the construction is so manifestly wrong?

His remarks on the story itself are just as groundless as

* Chap. xxiv. 24. † Ibid. 34.

those on the persons of the two disciples. He is, I suppose, offended at it, because there appears to be something miraculous in it. Miracles he treats everywhere as absurd and impossible, and seems to think that God has no more authority in his own creation than he and I have. St. Mark says our Saviour appeared to the two disciples in another form; St. Luke, that 'their eyes were holden;' and this the Considerer places to the account of contradictions; "one evangelist making the cause to be in the object, and the other in the eyes." It is strange the gentleman will not understand common language. Who does not see that the evangelists meant to express the self-same thing? If Jesus appeared in another form, their eyes of course were holden, that they should not know him: all that the historians mean to intimate is, that there was an impediment, which prevented their knowing him. That this might happen either in a natural or supernatural way, the author of the Trial has shown in a manner agreeable to reason and true philosophy, and such as will correspond exactly with the expressions of both evangelists. The Considerer has thought proper to take no notice of this, or none that deserves any answer.

One question however he has put in regard to this story, to which I shall give him an answer. The question is this: "Can any good reason be given why Jesus did not discover himself to them by the way, and give them the joy which such discovery would have made?"

Now the point discussed on the road was, whether it was not agreeable to prophecy that Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead. Christ himself undertook to prove this proposition at large from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the argument seemed to have its intended effect. Suppose now he had first made himself known, and then entered on this argument, what would have been the consequence? Plainly this; the surprise of seeing one from the dead, and the authority of Christ reasoning from the Scriptures, must have disturbed their judgment, and made them perhaps submit to his interpretation of the prophecies, without considering whether just or not. The plain reason therefore why the discovery

was not made sooner is, that he might convince their understandings first on the strength of reason and argument, whilst their minds were yet free from any impression by the event itself, and the irresistible force of Christ's own authority. This reason ought to have great weight with the Considerer, because it is founded on a maxim very much talked of, though very little observed by the gentlemen of his stamp, that all prejudice and prepossession should be excluded in searching after truth.

The appearance of our Saviour at different times to the women and to one or two of the disciples detached from the rest, adds no small weight to the general evidence of the resurrection. But the greatest point singly considered, is his showing himself to the whole body of disciples; eating, drinking, and conversing with them, and giving them an opportunity of being satisfied of the fact at leisure, by all proper methods of trial, and by the variety of evidence that a matter of fact is capable of. Such appearances there are several. The credit of them stands on the united testimony of all the New Testament writers. The four evangelists, the author of the Acts, and St. Paul are unanimous in the point. And what has the Considerer opposed to evidence so full and strong? why he is puzzling himself and his readers with some circumstances of time and place, which he either does not or will not understand; comparing the conciseness of one writer with the copiousness of another, mistaking one appearance for another, and with his usual decency calling them inconsistencies, improbabilities, absurdities, and contradictions.

Be his objections what they will, the importance of the subject demands what the writer has no claim to, a serious answer. I shall therefore compare the several writers of the gospel together, as to the manner of stating the fact, and take notice of the Considerer's exceptions as they fall in my way. I would ask then, wherein do Matthew, Mark, and Luke differ as to the point in question? Do they not agree one and all that Christ showed himself to the eleven Apostles? This, I think, is granted. And do they not farther agree with regard to his discourse, that it was in sum and substance the same? This the

Considerer does not deny. Where then lies the difference? Why Matthew, it seems, "disagrees with Luke as to time and place; for Matthew says it was at a mountain in Galilee; whereas, according to Luke, it was at Jerusalem." The Considerer will excuse me if I take no notice of his pretended difference of time; the matter of place being once explained, the time will rectify itself.

It is allowed then that the place of interview, according to St. Matthew, was in Galilee; according to St. Luke, at Jerusalem. What then? Does St. Matthew say that he met his disciples nowhere but in Galilee, or St. Luke that he saw them only at Jerusalem? Nothing like it. What hinders then, but that they might meet both in Galilee and Jerusalem? The Considerer thinks that, in the sense of these writers, they met for the first and last time; but here again he concludes, as usual, a great deal too fast, and outruns his evidence. Does either of them declare that it was the first and last time? No. What circumstance then is it, on which the Considerer builds so positive a conclusion? Why it is this; neither of these writers mentions more than one interview with Christ and his Apostles, therefore in their sense of the matter there could be but one. Is this the logic that is to prove Christ and his Apostles to be cheats and impostors? "to show mankind the stupid nature of bigotry, and to hold forth the acceptable light of truth?" Is it not amazing that a man should set up for a disturber of religion, who is so poorly provided with that natural logic of common sense which all men are born with?

Had the Considerer had the least inclination to treat the gospel with any fairness, he could not have mistaken so egregiously in this part. "Matthew and Luke," he observes, "disagree in time and place." Is it not a natural consequence that they speak of different appearances? Doubtless it is. But instead of making this use of it, he supposes them, without the least proof for it, to speak of one and the same appearance, and to contradict one another in assigning different times and places.

But that there may not remain any doubt or obscurity on this part of the history, it is proper to take notice of the rea-

son why the message sent from the sepulchre appointed the disciples to go into Galilee to see Jesus, though he notwithstanding appeared to them that very night at Jerusalem.

Our blessed Lord before his crucifixion told his disciples, 'After that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.'* This was the evidence he promised to give of his resurrection; and Galilee probably was chosen for the place, because he had spent much time, and had many disciples there who were to have this evidence given them. This then was the public appearance of which our Lord had given notice in his lifetime; whereas the appearances at Jerusalem were not on notice given, and were to the eleven Apostles, and to such only as happened to be with them.

The angels therefore, and our Lord himself in his first appearance, remind the disciples to go into Galilee to receive the evidence he had promised to give them of his resurrection. There was no occasion to mention his intention to see them that night at Jerusalem, of which no expectation had been given.

Now though the appearance at Jerusalem was to the eleven only, yet the message to meet him in Galilee was to all his disciples. St. Mark makes the promise of this appearance to concern the women as well as the men. The words of the angels to the women are, 'there shall ye see him as he said unto you.' This then was a public meeting before an assembly warned to be present; and here it was (as there is great reason to suppose) that our Lord appeared to about five hundred brethren at once, according to the relation made by St. Paul.†

The intermediate appearance to the Apostles interfered not with this appointment, which was observed by the Apostles who went into Galilee to see Jesus there. This being the appearance foretold, and the evidence specially promised, St. Matthew passes over all the other appearances, and reports this as the completion of our Lord's prophecy, as the assurance given in his lifetime, repeated by the angels, and by himself at the sepulchre. He mentions the eleven only as travelling into Galilee, in obedience to the command they received; but

* Matth. xxvi. 32. Mark xiv. 28. † 1 Cor. xv.

it is to be collected from his short account that others were present and saw the Lord; for he says of the eleven, 'when they saw him they worshipped him'—and adds, 'but some doubted;' who can hardly be supposed to be any of those who had seen him before at Jerusalem, and on seeing him now worshipped him.

But it may be proper to consider under one view the several appearances of Jesus, and the order of them, as it may be called from the sacred historians.

1. The first, which was at or near the sepulchre, to Mary Magdalene and other women, has been accounted for at large already.

2. That to the two disciples going to Emmaus was on the day of the resurrection, and is attended with no material difficulty arising from the account as to time or place, or any other circumstances. The Considerer has no fault to find, but that there is something miraculous in the circumstances of it. This too has been considered, as far as was necessary.

3. The same day our Lord appeared to St. Peter, but whether before he conversed with the two disciples or after, is not certain. It was not till after the two disciples had left Jerusalem, and set out for Emmaus; for it appears in the account they give our Lord of what had come to their knowlege, that they knew nothing of any appearance to Peter; and yet it was before these two disciples returned to Jerusalem, for they found the eleven discoursing of this appearance to Peter. It is doubtful therefore whether of the two last mentioned should be placed first; but they both happened on the day of the resurrection.

4. The next in order is the appearance on the evening of the same day unto the eleven, mentioned by St. Mark xvi. 14. and St. Luke xxiv. 36. and St. John xx. 19. St. Luke and St. John plainly enough describe the time of this appearance; and that St. Mark means the same appearance may be collected from our Saviour upbraiding the eleven—'because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen;' which shows that this was the first time he had appeared to them himself.

5. The appearance to the eleven when Thomas was with them, John xx. 26. which was eight days after.

6. The appearance to the seventy disciples at the sea of Tiberias, John xxi. 1.

7. The appearance in Galilee mentioned expressly by St. Matthew only, but referred to Acts i. 4.

8. The appearance at Jerusalem before his ascension, Acts i. 6. It is plain this appearance was at Jerusalem; for ver. 4. our Lord orders the Apostles to tarry at Jerusalem; and that he met them just before his ascension is evident, ver. 12. for they returned to Jerusalem, from whence they had followed him to Mount Olivet, to be witnesses of his ascension.

I omit the relation of appearances given by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. for his account creates no difficulty.

The time of the five first appearances is clear enough. The sixth, which is the appearance at the sea of Tiberias, was before the command given them not to depart from Jerusalem, for after that command they could not have gone to the sea of Tiberias. The seventh then was that wherein they received the command to stay at Jerusalem, and was the appearance appointed in Galilee by our Lord in his lifetime, and by the angels at the sepulchre. The eighth was the last, and is rightly placed as to the order of time and as to the place; for it followed the injunction to stay at Jerusalem, and was that wherein our Lord ascended, which was the last appearance to the Apostles.

Let us see now whether by this light we can account for the manner in which the evangelists relate these appearances. If you read Matthew by himself, you have an account of one appearance only. The same may be said with respect to Mark and Luke, who both seem to speak of the same appearance, but manifestly a different one from that of St. Matthew, which was in Galilee; whereas the other was at Jerusalem. How comes it now to pass that these evangelists mention each of them but one appearance, if there were indeed so many more? The truth is, that the evangelists did not write full histories of our Saviour's life, but short annals or commentaries; and sometimes contracted into one discourse or narration things relating to the same matter, though spoken or done at different

times. What St. John says of his own gospel, 'many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book,'* may be said very fairly of the rest. The words of St. John follow immediately after the account he has given of the appearances to the disciples after the resurrection, and probably referred to the opinion in his gospel of many other appearances made to the disciples.

Now though St. Matthew reports only the appearance in Galilee, and St. Mark and St. Luke seem to report only that on the day of the resurrection at Jerusalem; yet St. Mark has given a plain intimation of that in Galilee, by the message from the angels to the disciples; and St. John has reported and distinguished three appearances, and given notice that there were others not written in his book.

St. Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, has referred to several appearances, telling us that 'Jesus showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.'† You have here a concise general account of our Lord's appearing to his disciples, and of the subject-matter of his discourses to them at those times, that he spoke 'of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.' After this general account he mentions two distinct appearances, which were necessary to be taken notice of, to introduce the account he had to give of the ascension. The first is that wherein he orders them to 'tarry at Jerusalem;' the second is that at Jerusalem, when he took leave of them and ascended. The first of these appearances is remarkably introduced, ver. 4. 'and being assembled together with them;' the original is, *καὶ συναλιζόμενος*: *supple αὐτοὺς*; which words are properly to be rendered, 'and having assembled them together.'‡ The other appearances recorded seem to be accidental, by our Lord's coming in when the eleven were not together; but this is spoken of as a meeting summoned by himself, and was, I doubt not, that meeting which he had appointed the day of his resurrection, by the message sent to the disciples by the angels and

* John xx. 30. † Acts. i. 3. ‡ Vid. Grotium in loc.

by himself, and is the very same meeting in Galilee mentioned by St. Matthew. At this meeting St. Luke says, the disciples received the order to tarry at Jerusalem; after which they could not travel into Galilee, as they were commanded, and consequently this appearance was itself the appearance at Galilee; or happened after it, which there is no reason to think.

The disciples being thus ordered to Jerusalem, repair thither. 'When they therefore were come together, they asked him, Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' ver. 6. This question was not asked at the assembling mentioned ver. 4. which is clearly distinct from that mentioned ver. 6. for what occasion was there to mention again their coming together, after we had been just told they were together? Had it been said, 'then they asked,' &c. it would have been a continuation of the discourse with the same assembly; but when their meeting together is so distinctly mentioned, it shows it to be another and a different meeting, after the disciples were got together at Jerusalem.

At this meeting our Lord assures them they should receive power by the coming of the Holy Ghost, then led them to Bethany, or Mount Olivet, and in their presence ascended.

Let us examine now how far these particular accounts will enable us to adjust the abridged narration of our Saviour's appearances in the three first evangelists. The fullest is that of St. Luke: he mentions our Lord's appearing to the eleven, and those with them on the evening of the resurrection. But it is manifest, under that appearance, he brought together the sum of what was done and said by our Saviour during his abode on earth after the resurrection. For he begins to speak of his appearing the day of the resurrection, xxiv. 38. and continues his narration to the ascension, ver. 51. He tells us himself in the Acts, that there were forty days between the resurrection and ascension. It is undeniable then that his account in the gospel is an abridged account of what passed in our Lord's meeting his disciples during that time; and this clearly appears to be the case by comparing his abridged account with the more particular accounts already mentioned.

Luke xxiv. from verse 36. to 40. inclusive—you have the same account of what passed at the first appearance which St. John gives.	John xx. 19. 20.
At verse 49. you have what passed at the meeting in Galilee, mentioned by Matthew and Luke.	Matth. xxviii. 16. &c. Acts i. 4.
At verse 50. 51. you have what passed at the last meeting at Jerusalem, before the ascension mentioned in the Acts, and referred to in St. Mark.	Acts i. 6—9. Mark xvi. 19.

St. Luke says that our Lord came to the eleven just as the two disciples had reported what had passed in the journey to Emmaus; and as our Lord expounded to them the Scriptures and eat with them, so now he gives the same evidence and the same exposition of the Scriptures to the rest: and surely it was a natural thing to take up the same discourse, and open the understandings of the eleven, as he had opened the understanding of the two before, and to give them the same evidence of the reality of his resurrection, and this takes up from ver. 41. to 48.

St. Mark's narration is shorter than St. Luke's, but plainly of the same kind: he begins with an account of our Saviour's appearing, as St. Luke does, xvi. 14. and ends with his ascension, verse 19.

But as much abridged as these accounts are, one material thing there is, which none of the writers have omitted, namely, the commission then given to the Apostles 'to teach all nations,' and in consequence of it a promise of power and assistance from above.* St. Luke says, Acts i. 3. that the sub-

* Matth. xxviii. 19. 20. Mark xvi. 15. Luke xxiv. 47. 48. 49. John xx. 21. 22.

ject of his discourses to his disciples were 'the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.' These things are transmitted to us by every writer; and though none has mentioned every particular appearance, yet the sum of what was said at all the appearances is faithfully recorded by all.

I have stated this part of our Saviour's history for the sake of those who have patience and attention enough to consider it; and I hope such may find some light and satisfaction from what has been said. But with regard not only to this, but to all other parts of the history, it may be proper to observe that the number of writers makes amends for the deficiencies of any one. The Christian has a large field to range in; he is not to seek his faith in one evangelist, but in all. In all together he is sure to find a satisfactory account of his Master's life and doctrine; abundantly sufficient to direct his judgment, to convince his understanding, and to give him the satisfaction that is proper for a rational being.

It is to no purpose to go over the Considerer's objections to this part of the history. All he has said will, by comparing it with the foregoing account, be found to be built on his own mistakes. Some of them seem to be wilful; he supposes Matthew and Mark, who report our Lord's order to meet him in Galilee, to be contradicted by St. Luke, who reports an order to them not to depart from Jerusalem. He could not, I think, but see that these were different orders, given at different times and on different occasions. But be it to himself.

His objections to the relation given of the ascension of Jesus are of the same kind, and they will be easily accounted for by considering the series of the transactions above.

It is scarce worth while to observe, because it is obvious to the most indifferent reader, that after the revolt of Judas, *the eleven* was the current style for the whole college of Apostles; and after the call of Matthias to the Apostolate, they were again called *the twelve.* In virtue of this style, a general meeting of the Apostles is called a meeting of *the eleven*, or of *the twelve*, though one or more may happen to be absent. This is agreeable to both ancient and modern usage in the case of senates, councils, and the like. Hence it is that St. Luke says, xxiv. 20. '*the eleven* were gathered together,' though it

appears by St. John, xx. 24. that Thomas was absent. St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 5. calls it a meeting of *the twelve*, because he was not converted till after the election of Matthias, when that came again to be the usual style. Had the Considerer had sense enough to have seen this, (and a very little would have been sufficient for the purpose,) he might have spared himself the trouble and the shame of charging St. John, St. Luke, and St. Paul with contradicting one another. But he might perhaps hope that his readers would excuse a small blunder, for the sake of some beauties that rise out of it; such as his query with regard to St. Paul's account, "whether Judas was there to make up the number?" And his excuse for the Apostle, that "perhaps he had forgotten that one of them was fallen asleep:" conceits which he is so fond of, that they have passed the censure of his and his friend's second thoughts.

The story which St. John has left us of St. Thomas is so strong a proof of the resurrection of Christ, and so remarkable an evidence of the reality of his body, that I do not wonder to find the Considerer displeased with it. He has attacked it with a double portion of the spirit of folly and impiety, and has not, that I can find, dropped any thing that carries the face of an objection. He thinks his infidelity very extraordinary, because he would not believe that Jesus was risen from the dead, except he saw and felt the wounds that caused his death, and asks if these were better to be known than the form of his person, which they had so often seen. This I am afraid carries an implication with it which the Considerer was not aware of; that Thomas had no reason to be so nice and scrupulous; that the evidence of sight and the well known idea of his face and person were sufficient for conviction. Truth, I find, will sometimes obtrude itself on a man, even against his thoughts and inclinations. As to the wounds that caused his death, there is not, that I can find, one word about wounds in this whole story. The *τύπος τῶν ἥλων*, the print of the nails, or the scar that was left after the wounds were cured, is two or three times repeated, but nothing farther. Why then does the Considerer talk of wounds? Why, to introduce this very wise question: "is it to be supposed that the power which raised him to life did not cure those wounds?" It is

with just as little meaning that he asks, whether "another person who might have a mind to deceive could not make ears?" The reader, I believe, will not expect to have a formal confutation of such impertinent and senseless suggestions; barely reciting them is exposing them effectually.

Much about the same size with these is another exception he makes to this story. Because the wound in the side is mentioned only by St. John, he thinks Thomas and the other Apostles knew nothing of the matter. As if so extraordinary a circumstance was likely to be a secret to any of them; and as if Thomas's direct appeal to this circumstance was not a demonstration that it was no secret to him. I leave it with the reader, without any farther answer, as one instance amongst a thousand, of the folly and absurdity into which a man is sure to be betrayed when the unclean spirit of singularity has once seized him. The Considerer has said something more of this piece of history, but it is so like the sample already given, that it would be an affront to the reader to take any farther notice of it.

After having gone through his proofs against the credit of the gospel history, the Considerer returns to the 'Trial of the Witnesses.' The author of the Trial had observed that in all cases of consequence men take care to make choice of proper unexceptionable witnesses, that the same care was taken in the resurrection, and then adds, "How comes it to pass then, that the very thing which shuts out all suspicion in other cases, should in this case only be of all others the most suspicious thing itself." The Considerer answers, "because this case of all others is the most uncommon." Is that a reason why it should not be supported by the best evidence that human wisdom is able to think of in the most material cases? He goes on: "is it not absurd that the meanest witnesses should be picked and culled out for the best and greatest affairs?" What he intends by the meanest I know not. Men may surely be good witnesses without having great estates, and be able to report what they see with their eyes without being philosophers: as far then as the truth of the resurrection depended on the evidence of sense, the Apostles were duly qualified. But

how comes he to lay such stress on their meanness? Did their meanness stand in the way of the evidence, which arose from the great powers with which they were endowed from above? Consider their natural and supernatural qualifications, they were in every respect proper witnesses; take these qualifications together, and they were witnesses without exception. But the Considerer thinks the Apostles were "interested in the affair, and that half-a-dozen watchmen would have been better than a dozen Apostles." I would fain know what sort of witnesses he requires. Suppose half-a-dozen watchmen had seen and believed the resurrection, I doubt their being believers would have been, in his way of reckoning, an objection; he would have told us they expected commissions in the Messiah's army. Would he then have evidence from unbelievers? A witness who does not believe the truth of what he affirms is a mere cheat. Nobody therefore could be a witness to the resurrection but a believer; and such an one he esteems to be interested. But this is an absurd objection, because it is an objection to every honest witness that ever lived; for every honest witness believes the truth of what he says. If he means to charge the Apostles with views or hopes of temporal advantage to themselves, he shows himself to be a mere stranger to the history of the church, or wilfully imposes on his ignorant readers. How much the Apostles endured and suffered for the testimony of the truth, what havoc was made among the converts to Christianity by persecution on persecution for three hundred years together, until the empire became Christian, is as notorious as any part of history; and he may as well, and with as much truth, deny that there were any heathen emperors of Rome, as that the Apostles and first Christians were afflicted, tormented, and put to cruel deaths by them.

In the next page the Considerer repeats the old objection, "that Jesus did not show himself to the Jews after his resurrection." This plea had been examined, and answered in the Trial; and since the Considerer has thought fit to pass over in silence what he found there, I must refer the reader to the Trial itself for an answer to this old objection. And if he wants farther satisfaction, I recommend to him a little piece written

on this point only, and published in 1730.* The Considerer wonders, "that an extraordinary action, highly necessary to be known to mankind, should be so secretly done, that no man saw it; and that Jesus should require men to believe his disciples rather than their own senses." When so many saw him dead, and so many saw and conversed with him after he arose from the grave, it is surprising to hear this assertion, that no man saw the resurrection. Is any thing more wanting to complete a sensible proof of a resurrection, than to see a man dead and buried, and to see him alive again? But it seems the Jews could not believe the disciples in the report they made of the resurrection, without contradicting their own senses. They had then, in this writer's opinion, the evidence of sense against the truth of the resurrection. This is great news, and it is a pity this evidence was not produced; it would have been material to inform us which of their senses afforded that evidence; and by what means he came to know this piece of evidence which the Jews had, and which the world never heard of before, and which probably they will never hear of again.

The author of the Trial had taken notice of our Saviour's prediction just before his death, that the Jews should see him no more, till they said, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;'† and then added, "the Jews were not in this disposition after the resurrection, nor are they in it yet." The Considerer says that "Jesus himself found them in that disposition before his death;" and he refers for proof of this bold assertion to Luke xix. 38. The case there is this: on our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem, the multitude of disciples cried, 'Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord.' This was the language of the disciples only, and the Considerer does not think all the Jews were disciples. How comes he then to abuse the Scripture and his reader so grossly, as to quote this passage as a proof of the disposition of the

* 'An impartial Examination and full Confutation of the Argument, &c. against the truth of our Saviour's Resurrection, viz. that he appeared only to the disciples.'

† Luke xiii. 35.

Jews? Did he not read in the very next verse that the pharisees called on Christ 'to rebuke the disciples' for what they said? How could he be so shameless as to give this for evidence, that the Jews were in a good disposition, which proves so undeniably that they were in a bad one?

The author of the Trial observed that notwithstanding the story propagated among the people, that the disciples stole the body, yet in all the persecutions raised against them on several pretences, as of heresy, sedition, &c. they never were charged with any fraud in the resurrection. He observed too that the Christian faith, being grounded on the truth of the resurrection as the basis and foundation of the whole, "the thing for which they suffered was the truth of the resurrection." "So then," says this smart writer, "the chief priests never so much as charged the Apostles with any fraud in the resurrection, but they put them to death because they believed it."

I wish this writer loved trifling less, or that I liked it better, for at present it is too hard work to follow him. But I submit, and desire him to say whether every man that does not believe the story of the stealing the body by the disciples, must necessarily believe the resurrection; if not, then surely the chief priests might, consistently with their notions, persecute the Apostles for preaching the resurrection, though they did not charge them with stealing the body, or any fraud in contriving the resurrection.

The evidence of the Spirit in the signs and wonders wrought by the disciples in confirmation of the truth of their doctrine, was insisted on in the Trial; and I refer the reader to it, since the Considerer has made no reply to it. He says, "in this age we have almost lost it, except amongst the disciples of the inspired Mr. Whitfield, who has blown up a new light of it—— and has ventilated it by his bellows." What can be done with this profane buffoonery! I am sorry to see it; and if the author is not quite obdurate, I wish he may come to such a temper of mind as to be sorry for it too.

When the Apostles were brought before the chief priests and the council of the Jews, and preached to them the resurrection, Gamaliel, one of the council, said, 'if this be the work of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot

overthrow it.'* From this passage the author of the Trial argued that Gamaliel could not possibly have said this, or the council heard it with patience, if they had believed the resurrection a cheat, and that the disciples had stole the body. The argument was too strong for the Considerer, and therefore he questions the truth of Gamaliel's uttering these words; and for fear that should not be sufficient, he says, "Gamaliel might be so much a philosopher, as well as a scholar, to dissuade them from rigid persecution." How his philosophical notion of persecution comes in here is hard to say; one would think he was dreaming of persecution and talking in his sleep. The question is, how Gamaliel could make the supposition that the resurrection might be the work of God, if he knew it to be the fraud and cheat of men? What has his notion of persecution to do here? Besides, if Gamaliel knew the Apostles to be cheats, would his philosophy about persecution incline him to spare cheats, who (if they were cheats) were guilty of forgery and perjury, and every other crime necessary to carry on such a fraud?

The case of Agrippa, and the argument from it in the Trial, is much of the same kind. The Considerer supposes Agrippa to mean that Paul was mad, and says, "he had told Paul before he was a madman." Agrippa never did tell Paul so. The Considerer, I suppose, mistook Agrippa for Festus. It was natural for the Roman soldier, who knew nothing of the Jewish prophets, when he heard Paul appealing to them, to say, 'much learning had made him mad;'† but to put these words into Agrippa's mouth, who was bred up in a regard to the prophets, is quite out of character, as well as false in fact.

SECTION IV.

We have now gone through the Considerer's exceptions to the evidence of the resurrection, and to the defence of that evidence in the Trial of the Witnesses; but the business is not yet over. The Considerer has one argument still in reserve, which, were there any thing in it, would strike at the credit of reve-

* Acts v. 38. 39. † Acts xxvi. 24.

lation in general. He had given his opinion of miracles incidentally in several parts of his book, but at the conclusion he endeavors to support it at large. He thinks, " that miracles of any kind are impossible and exclude all evidence; that they are an absurdity to common sense and understanding; that they are inconsistent with the reason of man and nature of things; that they contradict all that mankind calls truth and reason; that they are contrary to the experience and reason of all mankind, and utterly impossible."

I shall discuss this point with him, and see what reason he has thus to dogmatise in opposition to the general opinion of all mankind in all ages of the world.

For the possibility of the resurrection, I must do the reader the justice once more to refer him to the Trial of the Witnesses; where he will find this point stated and explained in such a manner that no man, that is less a sceptic than the Considerer, can have any doubt about it. The Considerer has made a show of answering this part of the Trial, without stating the author's argument, without seeming to understand one word of the scope of it, and without citing one sentence fairly. So far as that author is concerned, it is sufficient to say in his own words, what is the real truth, " that he has said nothing on this occasion than what any man who never saw ice might say against a hundred honest witnesses, who assert that water turns to ice in cold climates."

For the reason and possibility of miracles in general, I shall now beg leave to talk with him. He is very frank in declaring his opinion with regard to this point, and I have laid it before the reader in his own words. Nothing can well be stronger than the language in which he has expressed it. He seems plainly to declare that miracles are not only impossible in a moral, but in a physical sense; that they are not only inconsistent with the moral attributes, but impossible even to the power of God.

But be this as it will. I shall take the arguments as he himself has stated them, and examine them by the rules of common language and common sense. He has indeed so involved himself in words, that when he has a meaning, it is not easy to come at it. Reason, right reason, truth, and the na-

ture of things, are words of great weight in the apprehensions of most men. Let us see what place they hold in the Considerer's estimation. "What conceptions any man frames to himself of the course of nature from his own experience and observation, are not prejudices and imaginations; but what sense and reason are concerned about. This is the very foundation of that right reason, which can never contradict the truth of things." In the first edition it stands thus: "this is the very foundation of right reason; and reason formed from hence can never contradict the truth of things."

If every man's notion of the course of nature is the very foundation, &c. of right reason, then right reason varies as much as people's notions of the course of nature. It is then right reason that says the sun goes round the globe, for this the vulgar reckon to be the course of nature. It is right reason also, to say the sun is fixed, and the planets move round him; for this appears from the experience and observation of astronomers to be the course of nature. But how absurd is it to make right reason depend on the notions which men entertain of the course of nature; when it is the very office and business of reason to rectify the errors which men perpetually fall into in the judgments they make in this case. Experience and observation show that a cane half in the water and half out is crooked; but reason, on the principle of true science, informs us otherwise. Here then experience and observation are on one side, and reason on the other; and the same conclusion holds true in a thousand instances, and every instance indeed where men make a wrong judgment of what they see. And the fault in this case does not lie in the experience and observation, but in the reasoning on them. Thus men do not err in their observation when they say that water never grows solid in hot climates; but they err in reasoning on this observation, and concluding that the case can never be otherwise. That men die and come not to life again here, is a true observation; but will this observation prove that it can never be otherwise? We see by observation the effects of the course of nature, but this course of nature depends on causes removed out of our sight. Observation shows how these causes operate generally,

but cannot show that they are immutable, and must operate invariably in every instance.

But let us see how he reasons the point of miracles. Take the proposition as it stands, with the reason annexed. "Things asserted which are contrary to the experience and reason of all mankind, and what they know of the law and usual course of nature, (that is, miracles,) are to the common sense and understanding of man utterly impossible." We must rectify the proposition before we come to the reason. In the first part, which is intended as a description of miracles, the Considerer assumes too much; a miracle is indeed contrary to common experience and the usual course of nature, but why contrary to reason? If by reason he means right reason or truth, it is supposing the very thing in question. If he means the faculty of reason, it will come to the same thing, supposing that faculty to be rightly used, otherwise it is nothing to the purpose.

With the Considerer's leave then, I shall expunge the word 'reason,' (which will not injure the argument,) and the proposition will stand thus: "things asserted, which are contrary to the experience of all mankind, and to what they know of the laws and usual course of nature, (that is, miracles,) are, to the common sense and understanding of men, utterly impossible." Now comes the reason; "because such assertions contradict all men's notions of such laws that are known by experience," That is to say, things contrary to experience are impossible, because they are contrary to experience; or things contrary to what men know of the laws of nature are impossible, because they are contrary to what men know of the laws of nature. This is what the Considerer calls giving a reason.

But I cannot yet part with the proposition. Miracles, it seems, "are to the common sense and understanding of men impossible." How are we to understand this expression? Does he mean impossible to the reason of men, or impossible to the conceptions of men? Impossible to the reason of man they are not, because the reason of man tells him there is a being who originally gave laws to matter, and regulates the

course of nature; and consequently who can, if he pleases, alter or suspend those laws, and change the course of nature. If he means that miracles are impossible to the conceptions of men, it is granted; that is, it is granted that men do not conceive how they are wrought; they do not conceive how or in what manner a dead body is raised to life, nor how or in what manner a word only should give a blind man sight. In this sense the Considerer's proposition may be true, but then it is nothing to his purpose. Miracles are inconceivable; yes, and so are many things that happen every day, which we do not reckon miraculous. It is inconceivable how matter acts on matter, either in gravitation, attraction, magnetism, or in any other well known operation; but we do not therefore give the lie to our senses, and say it does not act because we cannot conceive how it acts. So that if the Considerer means that miracles are impossible to the reason of men, it is evidently false; if he means that they are impossible to the conceptions of men, it may be true, but is quite beside his purpose.

But let us see how this point is argued in the next page. Perhaps we shall meet with a better reason there. "To believe it possible, (that is, for a dead body to rise again,) contradicts this maxim, 'that nature is steady and uniform in her operations.'" Nature, or the laws of nature, would doubtless, when not controlled by the author of nature, operate steadily and uniformly. A lion would produce a lion, an acorn an oak: matter would continue to gravitate, human beings to die, and dead bodies to mix with the earth, and not come to life again. What does the maxim prove then? Only that a dead body cannot come to life again in the natural way. Nobody disputes this with the Considerer. The question is, whether it may not be done in a supernatural way; whether the great Author of nature, whenever he thinks it convenient, cannot supersede or suspend the general laws of nature. Will the Considerer deny this? If he believes a God and a providence, as he professes to do, he cannot. Well; but it contradicts the aforesaid maxim, because "one miracle or action done contrary to her (that is, nature's) laws, contradicts all her regular springs and movements, and all that mankind calls truth and reason." How does such an action contradict all nature's uniform move-

ments? Does it imply that her movements are not uniform when uncontrolled? Nothing like it. Does it imply that they are not uniform in that particular instance? that is, that her movements in that instance are contrary to the general course of nature? Most certainly it does, for it is of the essence of a miracle to be contrary to the general course of nature. What then? This proves nothing; it is only giving the thing in dispute as a reason against itself. But let us hear the other part of the reason: "a miracle contradicts all that mankind calls truth and reason." How does this appear? Why, you must take the Considerer's word for it. But does he not know that it is the very thing in question? The inquiry is, whether miracles are contrary to reason. The Considerer undertakes to prove that they are; and how does he prove it? Why thus: "miracles are contrary to reason, because they contradict this maxim, that nature is steady and uniform in her operations." And how do they contradict this maxim? Why, because "they contradict what mankind calls truth and reason." Is not this saying that miracles are contrary to reason, because they are contrary to reason?

"A miracle," the Considerer says, "contradicts all that mankind calls truth and reason." Let us try it in a particular instance. We read in the gospel that our Saviour walked on the water. What truth or what reason does this contradict? It is a well known truth that all bodies gravitate, and it is another that human bodies will sink in fluids. Does it contradict either or both these truths? Surely not. All bodies continue to gravitate, and human bodies to sink in fluids, as they did before; and Christ's own body followed the same law of gravitation, that particular case only excepted. All that this fact supposes is, that there is a power in nature that can suspend the laws of gravity, or change fluids into solids. If this is contradicting truth, let the Considerer show it.

It is an unwelcome and an unprofitable task to deal with an author who gives words only for arguments. By the specimen I have given of this author's reasoning on the natural possibility of miracles, the reader, I believe, will find this to be the case here. He goes on to show that they are impossible in a moral view, that, supposing God to have power over his

own works, or, as he expresses it, "that he can do things contrary to nature, there is no reason that he ever did or will do it." It is, he thinks, contrary to the perfection of his nature, to his unchangeableness, his wisdom, his justice, and his goodness. Let us see how he proves it.

"Those," says he, "who found religion on extraordinary pretensions, say that nature, which is the offspring of God, is degenerate and deficient." It is not easy to deal with an author who uses terms so equivocally, that one can come at his meaning only by guess. It is difficult to say what we are to understand by nature. If by nature the Considerer means, what he seems most commonly to understand by it, the constitution of the material world, the proposition is evidently false: extraordinary pretensions do not imply that nature in this sense is deficient, nor indeed do they imply any thing with regard to nature; for what connexion is there between the extraordinary pretensions of the Christian religion, and the perfection of the material world? When our Lord, for instance, by a word caused the fig-tree to wither, did it suppose any deficiency in the constitution of vegetables? No more than if the tree had been felled by an axe. Whatever the constitution of vegetables, or whatever the constitution of the material world be, such actions declare nothing either as to their perfection or imperfection; they only declare that the God of nature has authority over his own workmanship.

But perhaps by nature the Considerer means human nature, or the moral nature of man. Let us try the proposition in this sense. "Those who found religion on extraordinary pretensions, say that human nature, which is the offspring of God, is deficient." Man is subject to error and corruption; and in this sense human nature may well be said to be deficient, whether God interposes or not. Whether religion be founded on extraordinary pretensions or not, human nature is still deficient; if this be an objection under revealed religion, it is an objection under natural religion too. When a youth is taught to read and to write; when he is instructed in religion and the sciences; does it not imply that human nature wants help, and is in itself deficient? And what does it imply more when God vouchsafes to help and assist it? It is very improper, it is false

to say the offspring of God or the work of God is deficient; but it is not improper to say that man is imperfect or deficient. The truth is, the sense of the word *deficient* is different in one case from what it is in the other. God's works are said to be perfect in this particular view, that they are adapted to the end for which they were designed; and yet man or any other created being is imperfect or deficient, when compared with a greater being, and especially when compared with the greatest of all beings.

The Considerer has another argument, which bears a near resemblance to this, and is as follows: "the whole production of God's wisdom, goodness, and power must be a perfect work; therefore cannot be better.—If God be a perfect being, his works are perfect, and cannot be mended." The Considerer talks sometimes of Providence; I should be glad to know what is his notion of Providence. He seems to suppose that God formed the universe as a vast machine, with the several orders of beings in it, and then, like the Epicurean deities, left it to shift for itself, without concerning himself at all about it. If there be such a thing as Providence, which the Considerer himself confesses, if God ever interposes in his own creation, it must be to mend something, though not to mend his own original work. It is not proper to say that God's work is mended by revelation, as the Considerer supposes, in any other sense than it is mended by a good schoolmaster, or an able professor of the sciences. Revelation indeed mends or improves men; that is, it furnishes them with greater and better lights than mere reason could; but it alters not the nature and constitution of men, it affects not the original workmanship of God.

But farther: the material world is (like all machines of human contrivance) governed by necessary laws, and the constitution of it cannot be altered by any power within itself. But it is not so in the moral world. Man was originally endued with properties of a different kind from those of matter. He has a power over his own actions, a power of improving or depraving his moral nature. One man makes the proper improvement of the powers which nature gave him, another abuses him. One nation or one age makes high advances in know-

ege and virtue, another is sunk in ignorance and corruption. f such enormities are the natural consequences of the original onstitution of man, what reason is there to exclude Providence rom regulating and correcting them? If the system of man is o be considered under the notion of one great machine, it must e considered as a machine that has a power within itself of utting itself out of order; and if it should be out of order, as rom the nature of its several springs and wheels it may well be upposed to be, where is the impropriety of the great Artificer nterposing and correcting it? If man has a power of choosing ood or evil, he may choose the latter; if he has faculties for liscovering truth, he may notwithstanding neglect it, he may verlook or mistake it: it is easy to see what room here is for rror and corruption. So that, however perfect the original vork was, it may in time, from the nature of the thing, want nending.

"Natural powers," the Considerer says, "are fit to answer ll the ends of religion, therefore supernatural powers are need- ess." What he means by answering the ends of religion he ells you in what follows; "to teach the most excellent mo- als, with a reasonable belief of one God and providence." I hall not dispute with the Considerer how far some men may dvance on the strength of mere reason: some have no doubt one great lengths; but man, the Considerer knows, is not in- allible. He may embrace error under the notion of truth, and teach it as such; and the corruption may spread and become general. What is to be done in this case? The Considerer seems to think that a man of honesty and understanding would be well able to cure his disorder without supernatural endow- ments. I am not of his opinion; inveterate error is not to be expelled so easily; human reason and human authority, espe- cially when it comes to be general, do not seem to be a match for it. If we may reason from fact, there is nothing more sure than this. There were no doubt some men of honesty and un- derstanding in the heathen world; but what progress did they make in reforming it? How far did they advance in removing that universal corruption with which it was overrun? Take a view of paganism from the time of Socrates to the time of Christ, the most enlightened period of antiquity, and see what

progress truth had made. What were the public institutions of religion but the worst and grossest superstition and impiety? So much of truth as had been discovered was confined to the few; and if happily they might chance to keep it, it was not likely to get any farther. Every national religion was looked on as the dictates of the gods, and forbidden to be altered by man; so that truth was as it were prohibited by law. How then was it to be recovered, with the civil power and the prejudices and passions of mankind against it? Let the Considerer show, if he can, that a man of honesty and understanding without any supernatural powers would be equal to this work.

But the Considerer thinks "a power of working miracles is contrary to the unchangeableness of God;" for "the same causes," he says, "must always produce the same effects." His reason, if he intended it as a reason, is a very unlucky one. I cannot see the most distant relation between the premises and the conclusion. The same causes produce the same effect. Right! but in miracles a new cause is introduced; and if his argument proves any thing, it proves that natural causes will not produce miracles; but do we ascribe miracles to natural causes? He goes on; "but miracles are urged to prove a change in the will of God; that is, impossible things are urged to prove an impossibility." According to the Considerer, it seems, it is a principle agreed on by both believers and unbelievers, that miracles are used to prove a change in the will of God. If you grant him this, and admit too that miracles are impossible, he will draw this notable conclusion, that impossibilities are urged to prove an impossibility.

But suppose neither of them is granted, what will become of his conclusion? The reader has already seen his reasons, if they may be called reasons, for thinking miracles to be impossible. But what pretence has he to say that miracles are urged to prove a change in the will of God? Where or when were they ever urged to this purpose? or how indeed do they prove it? The Considerer is intirely silent as to all these points, and yet he goes on reasoning on the supposition of miracles proving a change, nay, of their being allowed to prove a change in the will of God.

The Considerer has puzzled himself unaccountably with the

immutability of God, than which there is not one attribute in the divine nature more clear and precise. It is his being and perfections that are immutable, and not his actions, unless you will suppose men and all other beings immutable too. His actions are always the same when circumstances are the same; but what sense is there in supposing that immutable wisdom must act in all cases, how different soever, in the same way? The counsels of Providence are directed by unerring wisdom; but the same wisdom prescribes different measures on different occasions. Miracles of themselves can be no proof that God's counsels are mutable, either with respect to the natural or the moral world; not with respect to the natural, because suspending some one law of matter to serve some moral purpose is no proof that the counsel of God is changed with regard to the general laws and constitution of matter; not in the moral, because miracles may, for any thing that appears to the contrary, be useful to answer some moral end, and to serve the great purposes of Providence in some cases and not in others.

This the Considerer is not willing to allow; for if miracles were ever necessary, they must in his judgment be always necessary.

The Considerer has so good a talent at reasoning, that I cannot refuse him and the reader the justice of producing his argument, as he himself has stated it. "If miracles were ever necessary, whether the divine and human nature, or the nature of things be *changeable or unchangeable*, they must be always necessary. For if God ever wrought miracles to be the proof of the knowlege of his will, he will always pursue the same methods, *if he is an unchangeable being*." That is to say, "the proposition is true, whether God be changeable or not, for a reason which expressly supposes him to be unchangeable." The Considerer has generally the fortune to have his positions and his reasons hang very ill together. But let us examine the latter part of the argument by itself, and see what there is in it. "God is an unchangeable being; therefore, if he ever wrought miracles as a proof of his will, he will always pursue the same method." It is allowed that God is an unchangeable being. It follows from thence that his conduct will always be the same in the same state of things; if he works miracles in one case,

he will do it again whenever the same case, with all its circumstances, returns. But if he does it when the state of mankind requires it, it does not follow that he will do it when the state of mankind does not require it. Let the Considerer show that it cannot be expedient for mankind at one time and not at another. Till he can prove this, he proves nothing. Let us try his reasoning in a common case. Should the subjects of some great prince rise in arms against him, and should he quiet them by offering a general pardon without punishing their crime; will it follow that he ought to pursue the same method in every rebellion? And will it follow that his counsels are mutable if he does not? The Considerer himself will not have the folly to assert it. Lenity may be necessary at one time, and severity at another; and each of these measures, though not only different but opposite, may be the effect of the same wisdom and prudence.

But if "God has wrought wonders in one generation and not another," it seems, "he must be a partial being." The Considerer does not know what he is about when he charges God with partiality. According to his little view of things, Providence may be accused as partial in many other instances, and with more appearance of reason than in this. Why does he not complain that one man has greater natural endowments than another, that he is superior in wealth, in dignity, in power, or whatever else is esteemed great and illustrious? If that is to be looked on as partiality which the Considerer judges to be such, I leave him to reflect where his opinion will terminate. He says, "that miracles are equally necessary to all people, and therefore if God grants them to one generation and not another, he is a partial being." If bold assertions were to be admitted as proofs, there is nothing which the Considerer is not capable of proving. Let him prove (instead of asserting) that miracles are equally necessary in all ages, and then it will be time to talk with him. Here is a maxim which the Considerer himself allows to be a just one, that Providence does nothing in vain. If then a series of wonders are wrought in one age, why may not the memory of them be duly preserved for the benefit of succeeding ages? And if they are so preserved, would not repeating them in succeeding ages be unnecessary?

When error and corruption have been once conquered, and the true religion established by the help of miracles, why are not such miracles, when recorded by proper hands, sufficient to support and preserve it? The Considerer calls on us to show "what lasting monuments we have of them, by which they may be clearly evidenced, and may appear true against all contradiction." He needs not go to the place in which they were wrought, where only he thinks such monuments are to be found. They are much nearer home than he is willing to believe; they are already in his own hands, if he knew how to use them and set a just value on them. The gospels are the monuments wherein those miracles are recorded, and he must prove them to be all a forgery, before he can with reason complain for want of authentic monuments; which he will find it no easy matter to do, against the testimony of all antiquity, of the enemies of Christianity, as well as its friends.

I have now gone through the material things, and to my own sorrow many immaterial things in the Considerer's book. When the book first appeared, it seemed to require no answer; and to those who can judge of the weight of arguments, it required none. But when it came into the hands of those who were not able to see how they were imposed on, the case was altered. For their sakes this answer was prepared, and is now published. One thing at least they may learn from these papers, not to trust a man who abuses religion out of love to truth. It is not Scripture he attacks, whatever he pretends; but Scripture distorted and perverted. Look over the pretended Answer to the Trial; where is there an argument of any weight that is built on a true representation of Scripture? I will not say that all his mistakes of this kind are wilful; many of them, I am afraid, are so. But I judge him not.

SUMMARY.

Abraham and Melchizedek.

PREVIOUS observations on the professions of an author. On the history of Abraham: one of the facts therein, relating to his interview with Melchizedek, stated. Mr. Chubb's interpretation of it, contrary to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, makes Melchizedek give tithes to Abraham. Passage quoted. Version of the Septuagint. Manner of Mr. Chubb's reasoning on it, as cited from the English version, considered. Mr. Chubb shown to argue like one that has not attended to the language of the Bible, in which nothing is more common than a change of persons in the same sentence: instances given. This criterion of the sense failing, recourse must be had to the circumstances of the case to determine it: these dilated on. The things which Abraham had, from which he could give tithes, are clear: those of Melchizedek not so evident. Reasons given from ancient custom, why Abraham should dedicate a tenth part of his spoils. Objections raised by Mr. Chubb against the priesthood of Melchizedek refuted: also those raised against the propriety of Abraham giving tithes, when he was himself a priest. The peculiar character of Melchizedek considered. Consideration of Mr. Chubb's remark, that the Canaanites at this time, with the exception of Melchizedek and his subjects, were idolaters. Conclusion.

Esau and Jacob.

Remarks on the history of God's providence, and difficulties in it, which however are no just objections to its truth. Refe-

rence to the case of Esau and Jacob. Mr. Chubb thinks that Esau was a better man than Jacob, and ought therefore to have been preferred, as heir of the promises made to Abraham: this shown to be poor reasoning. Instance of David. Jacob and his posterity not chosen for their own sakes. The fate of Esau and Jácob in part foretold, while they were yet in their mother's womb. Different dispositions of the two brothers. Sale of the birthright: explanation of this extraordinary transaction. The blessing given to them by their father considered and explained. Mr. Chubb's arguments to blacken Jacob's character discussed.

History of Balaam.

Relative situation of the Israelites and Moabites. Office, country, and character of Balaam. Opinion entertained of the effects of a curse. Some obscurity in the story, of which Mr. Chubb has taken advantage: examination of it, to show what matter it affords for panegyric on the character and conduct of Balaam. Occasion of the mission of the ambassadors to him, and his answer. Second mission: leave given for Balaam's departure with them. God's anger against him accounted for: his character appears *bad* through the whole narrative: explicit testimony of Moses himself to the badness of it: testimony of St. Peter and St. Jude. Action of Balaam, when he left Balak, incidentally recorded: this agrees with the former part of his history. Mr. Chubb's attempts to clear his character in this respect refuted; also his attempts to throw an air of ridicule on the story of the ass.

Postscript.

Mr. Chubb's fourth dissertation shown to be quite foreign to the argument of the Bishop of Salisbury's sermon. The expulsion of the Canaanites is a stale subject, and Mr. Chubb has

only repeated old arguments. The point shown to lie in a very short compass; viz. has God authority over his own creation, and a right to punish daring wickedness in this world? This enlarged on. Probable impression which this judgment made on the Israelites shown from Judges ii. 7. Mr. Chubb's comments on this text refuted. Mr. Chubb's closing remark on the bishop's sermon: unfair imputations on his lordship's doctrine respecting God's providence refuted. Concluding exhortations to Mr. Chubb.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

The Editor has inserted the following pamphlet in the list of Sherlock's works on the authority of a learned friend, though with some doubt regarding its genuineness. It certainly bears strong marks of the Bishop's style and manner of reasoning, particularly that part of it which relates to the history of Esau and Jacob, as any one may perceive who will take the trouble of comparing it with his Discourses on Prophecy and the Dissertations: the doubt alluded to arises chiefly from a passage in the Postscript, where Mr. Chubb is accused of a desire to grace his work with a *great name* in order to give it currency. It seems at first sight hardly probable that a Christian prelate would speak thus of himself; but in reply it may be urged that the bishop was writing anonymously, and might have used this expression as a feint, and for the very purpose of concealment. One of the greatest hardships attending a periodical publication is the necessity which it often imposes on the editor to decide on a point without time being given him for complete investigation. This is eminently the case in the present instance, the Editor having no opportunity of consulting either books or friends: he may therefore possibly have erred in ascribing the tract to Sherlock; but he cannot err in recommending it to the reader's notice.

PREFACE.

THE tract which gave occasion to the following sheets, is intitled, "Four Dissertations. 1. On the history of Melchizedek; from which it appears that Abraham did not give tithes to Melchizedek, but Melchizedek to Abraham. 2. On the temper and behavior of Esau and Jacob, the two sons of the patriarch Isaac: whereby it appears that Esau was much the better man. 3. On the conduct of Balaam; in which that prophet's character is cleared of those reproaches and imputations with which it stands charged. 4. On Dr. Sherlock, Lord Bishop of Salisbury's assertion: namely, 'thus far all is well;' as grounded on, or an inference or conclusion from, the following premises; namely, 'And the people (of Israel) served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel.' Which premises are the text to his lordship's sermon lately published. By Thomas Chubb."

To search the Scriptures is the duty of every man, and to debate all points freely is the right of Englishmen; but there is a wide difference between free debate and licentious abuse; and yet nothing is more common with some men than to fall into the vicious extreme of abusing Scripture under the notion of debating with freedom. Woolston and Morgan are writers of this class; and Mr. Chubb in this tract has, in the judgment of serious men, followed them too closely. But if he has any credit to lose as an author, he should, methinks, be cautious of copying the style and spirit of those whom men of sense of all denominations despise.

THE CASE

OF ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK, THE HISTORY OF ESAU AND JACOB, AND THE STORY OF BALAAM, CONSIDERED AND EXPLAINED; AND THE MISTAKES OF MR. CHUBB AND OTHERS CORRECTED: WITH A POSTSCRIPT, RELATING TO THE EXPULSION OF THE CANAANITES BY JOSHUA.

ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK.

If you take an author on his own word, he writes with the best intentions in the world. Whatever be the visible tendency of his work, and in what spirit soever it be written, it is all for the love of truth and the benefit of mankind. You are sure of finding a great zeal for truth, and a great air of candor and good manners in his preface or dedication, though you meet with them nowhere else. Mr. Chubb sets out as usual with these laudable professions; assuring his patron and his readers that though he has the misfortune to differ from patriarchs, Apostles, and many other men of note, yet truth is the point he aims at. Whether he is sincere in professing it, his own conscience will best inform him; whether he has been so lucky as to discover it, the reader will judge.

The history of Abraham is full of extraordinary facts and events. One of these facts Mr. Chubb has stated and explained in a different manner from what others, whether Jews or Christians, had done before him. The history informs us that Melchizedek, king of Salem, met Abraham as he returned in triumph from the defeat of Chedorlaomer. At this interview it is agreed that tithes were given either by Abraham to Melchizedek, or by Melchizedek to Abraham; but who was the

giver, and who the receiver, is not expressly declared in the history. Whether Abraham was the receiver, or Melchizedek, is a point indifferent in itself, and the reader may perhaps wonder how Mr. Chubb came to employ so much time and pains in deciding it. The truth is, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in speaking of this transaction, supposes that Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek; and this was inducement sufficient for Mr. Chubb to take the other side of the question.

The writer of this epistle speaks his own sense, and the sense of Jews and Christians at that time; and their authority, one would think, is enough to silence a modest man in a point left undetermined in the original history, and of which they were much better judges than we. But laying aside all authority as of no importance to the question, Mr. Chubb appeals to the history itself; to the history therefore let us go.

'And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was a priest of the most high God; and he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And he gave him tithes of all.'*

The version of the Seventy was near three hundred years old at the birth of Christ, and was had in great reverence by the Hellenistical Jews, and afterwards by the Christians. In the common editions of this version, and in that copy of it printed in Walton's Polyglot, which was taken from the famous Roman edition, you read expressly, not *he* gave tithes of all, but 'Abraham gave tithes of all;' and yet Mr. Chubb "apprehends the several copies of the Pentateuch do not at all differ in their relation of this piece of history, with respect to the point under consideration." Dr. Grave has indeed omitted the word *Abraham* in his edition, because he found it not in the Alexandrian manuscript.

But I lay no stress on this word being in the Septuagint, and mention it only to show that Mr. Chubb's apprehension, exact as he would be thought, does sometimes outrun his evidence.

* Genesis xiv. 18. 19. 20.

Let us see then how he reasons on the history, as it has been cited from the English translation. "Here we see that the active person, or the person speaking (in the 18th, 19th, and part of the 20th verse) was Melchizedek; and the passive person, or the person spoken to and of, was Abraham. The historian goes on, without the least hint or intimation of a change of persons, and observes that he, the active person, or the person speaking, namely, Melchizedek, gave him, the passive person, or the person spoken to and of, namely, Abraham, tithes of all. Thus we see the historian is very particular and express, that it was Melchizedek which gave tithes to Abraham, and not Abraham to Melchizedek."

Mr. Chubb does not argue like one that has attended to the language of the Bible. Nothing is more common than a change of persons, without the least intimation given of it by the writer. One instance of this you find in the 11th verse of this very chapter, which Mr. Chubb, one would think, could not easily overlook. When Chedorlaomer had engaged and defeated the five kings in the vale of Siddim, the history says, 'they that remained, fled to the mountains.' Here, to speak in Mr. Chubb's language, the active persons, or the persons who fled to the mountains, were the broken remains of the conquered army. "The historian goes on without the least hint or intimation of a change of persons:" 'and they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and they took Lot and his goods and departed.' Who now were the persons that took Lot's goods, and the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah? Was it not the victorious army? Mr. Chubb confesses it was; and yet, by his new invented rule of actives and passives, it ought to be, not the conquerors, but the conquered.

If the reader will be at the trouble of looking forward to the 32nd verse of the xxivth chapter, he will find a remarkable instance to the same purpose. Abraham sent his servant to Bethuel, to demand his daughter Rebekah in marriage for his son Isaac. Her brother Laban received him and his company with much kindness and hospitality, and invited them into the house to take some refreshment. 'And the man (that is, Abraham's servant) came into the house: and he ungirded the camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and

water to wash his feet and the men's feet that were with him.' Here again you see no intimation of any change of persons. Who was it then that provided straw for the camels, and water to wash the men's feet? Was it Abraham's servant? By Mr. Chubb's rule of interpretation it should be so; in the mean time common sense shows it was Laban.

A change of person, without giving express notice to the reader, is frequent in all languages: in relating a conversation or transaction between two persons, it is difficult to avoid it, without an unnecessary and offensive repetition of names. Examples of this kind are indeed more common in the Hebrew than in any other language; and if the reader requires farther satisfaction in the point, he will scarce read two pages together in this book of Genesis, or any other historical book of Scripture, without receiving it.

The *he* in question may without all doubt, consistently with the rules of common speech, and agreeably to the genius of the Hebrew language, be referred either to Abraham or the king of Salem. And yet, on the strength of his actives and passives, Mr. Chubb scruples not to say that the historian is particular and express in referring it to the latter. These are very strong expressions, and one cannot but wonder that a man who sets up for a reasoner, should find nothing to support them but one small circumstancc that betrays his carelessness and inattention, or something worse.

Actives and passives then being quite out of the question, we must have recourse to some other criterion to determine who it was that paid tithes, Abraham or Melchizedek. The circumstances of the story are what must lead us to the truth, and to the circumstances Mr. Chubb himself in the next place appeals. "Melchizedek, it seems, had done nothing to or for Abraham, which called for such a grateful return; whereas Abraham had laid Melchizedek, and all the people in that neighborhood, under an obligation of gratitude to him, in that he had rid the country of their great oppressor." But what if no gratitude was intended by the giver of tithes to the receiver? Should this be the case, as will presently appear, what will become of this argument from Abraham's services and Melchizedek's gratitude?

There is indeed another circumstance, which, if true, would go near to decide the matter in Mr. Chubb's favor; and that is, that Abraham "had nothing in the valley of Shavek of his own to make a present with, or to give tithes of." But how does it appear that he had nothing proper for this use? Why, "he went out in haste, and the men that were with him; and therefore they took nothing with them but their weapons of war, and what was necessary to annoy the enemy, and did not needlessly incumber themselves with goods and riches to make presents withal." Well then, he went out to seek the enemy with instruments of war only; but did he bring nothing else back with him at his return? Did he not return laden with the spoils taken from Chedorlaomer? And has not the Epistle to the Hebrews told us that he gave Melchizedek a tenth of the spoil?* Yes, says Mr. Chubb; but "this supposition is altogether groundless, because when the king of Sodom offered to Abraham all the spoil, Abraham would not accept the least part for himself, not from a thread even to a shoe-latchet." But was it the whole of the spoil which the king of Sodom offered, and which Abraham refused, or was it only the nine parts after a tenth had been given to Melchizedek? This Mr. Chubb has left undetermined. He goes on: "besides the goods or spoil referred to was, antecedent to the aforesaid quarrel, the property of those unfortunate people whom Chedorlaomer and his adherents had vanquished." But will it follow that because it was their property before it was taken, it must be theirs also after it was retaken? Mr. Chubb must mend his logic, and learn to draw better consequences, or he will certainly not come at that truth which he professes to seek. Every one knows that spoils taken from a conquered enemy are the captor's property by the law of nations. Abraham's dividing† to his auxiliaries their portion of the spoil, is an evidence of the law at that time; and his returning his own share to the king of Sodom was a mere act of generosity, in consequence of a vow made to Almighty God, and not restoring a right.

* Ch. vii. 4. † Ver. 24.

But after all, had Chedorlaomer nothing else of value but what he took at the battle of Siddim? Mr. Chubb is positive that he had not. But has he forgotten that Chedorlaomer engaged the kings of Canaan just after he had conquered several other nations in that neighborhood? And can it be imagined that he conquered them merely for the sake of conquest, and that he neglected to take the usual fruits of victory?

Let him lay these things together, and then judge whether he might not have spared his reflexion on the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, for supposing that the tithes given to Melchizedek were a tenth part of the spoil. To call the supposition of an inspired writer altogether groundless, unnatural, and preposterous, is very hard language at the best; but to call it so without the least color of reason is a liberty which nothing can excuse.

That Abraham had something to give tithes of is a clear point; but that Melchizedek had any thing that could with any propriety be applied to this use, is not so evident. Mr. Chubb says, "he presented Abraham with a tenth part of the bread and wine he had provided, and such other good things as Salem afforded." The history speaks of nothing but bread and wine; the other good things are an addition of his own. And if he is authorised to make history, he might as well make the whole as a part, and then the business would be done without trouble. But be this to himself. That Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine is agreed; but if he gave Abraham a tenth part, and divided the other nine parts amongst his attendants, he made a very unnatural distribution. For what sense could there be in giving to Abraham for present refreshment, thirty or forty times as much as to any man in the company?

But after all, what if the bread and wine were not intended as a refreshment for Abraham and his men, (who wanted it not, having taken plenty of provisions from the enemy,) but for a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God? Should this be the case, where shall we find tithes to compliment Abraham with? Certain it is, learned men have understood it to be a sacrifice, and I am inclined to think Mr. Chubb cannot prove it was not so.

It is with a strange confidence that Mr. Chubb enters on this argument from circumstances; declaring in a very positive manner, as if the reader was to expect nothing less than demonstration, that Melchizedek was the giver of tithes, and that the circumstances do not admit it to be otherwise. But—*quid dignum tanto tulit hiatu?* What has he produced to support this positive and dogmatical air? He has laid hold of a few trifling circumstances, which, when rightly understood, (and they are very obvious to understand,) are altogether against him: is this becoming a man of sense and candor, and a professed seeker of truth?

I am ashamed to insist longer on trifles, and nothing should have engaged me to do it, but Mr. Chubb's having seriously urged them as decisive of the point in question. It is time to inform the unlearned reader (for it is such only that can be imposed on by this kind of reasoning) what is the real truth of the case.

It was a practice of very ancient standing to dedicate a tenth part of spoil taken from a conquered enemy, a tenth part of increase by husbandry or commerce, to the service of God, in acknowlegement of his protecting providence. The case before us is the most ancient instance of this sort left on record; and you meet with another instance * not long after, in the history of Jacob. It was not a practice confined to the land of Canaan, and in use only amongst the patriarchs and founders of the Jewish nation, but was observed in most parts of the world. You meet with it amongst the Romans, the Grecians, the Tyrians, the Carthaginians, the Arabians, and in short amongst most of the civilised nations of the old world.†

When therefore we read that Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek, we are not to suppose it was in gratitude to him, and for his own use and benefit, but in gratitude to God, the giver of victory and success; not under the notion of a personal compliment to Melchizedek, but an act of piety to God, in compliance with the general practice of that age and country.

* Gen. xxviii. 22.

† The reader will find this subject considered at large by Seld. de Decimis, and by Spencer de Leg. Heb. lib. 3. and the authors cited by them.

The king of Sodom, when Abraham offered to return his goods, made some difficulty at first in receiving them; but Melchizedek made none in receiving his tenth; a plain evidence that it was God's portion, and due by custom from the conqueror, to be employed in sacrifices and such other solemnities as were agreeable to the piety of the times.

But Mr. Chubb finds another difficulty in the case. Melchizedek, he thinks, had no right to receive tithes of Abraham in virtue of his priesthood; "because, though he was a priest, yet he was not a priest in and to the family of Abraham, and therefore did not stand in the relation of a priest to him; and because Abraham was also a priest himself, as every head of a family or tribe was both king and priest in his own house." Take the priesthood of Melchizedek in no higher sense than as Mr. Chubb has stated it, and you still see a propriety in his receiving tithes of Abraham. Abraham gave them, not as a priest, but as a conqueror, and in that character under an obligation to give them; not for any private advantage obtained for himself and family, but for a public blessing, in which the kings of Salem and Sodom had more than an equal share; he gave them to Melchizedek, who went forth to meet him in the territories of Salem, where he was priest and king; who no doubt applied them to the pious uses for which they were intended; and Abraham and the king of Sodom most probably took their share in the solemnity. Take the transaction in this light, and let Mr. Chubb prove, if he is able, that there is any thing in it inconsistent with the manners and piety of that age.

If he thinks it an absurdity that Melchizedek should receive tithes and make sacrifices for the victory of Abraham, because Abraham was a priest as well as himself, what will he think of the case of Jethro, Exod. xviii.? Jethro was both priest and prince of Midian; he met Moses in the wilderness at the head of the Israelites; Moses recounted to him the wonders God had wrought, and the kindness he had showed to Israel. A sacrifice was appointed in honor of God for his great mercies to him and his people, and Jethro performed the solemnity. Apply Mr. Chubb's reasoning to this fact, and see how it concludes. "To say that Jethro performed the sacrifice as a priest, must needs be weakly urged; because though he was a

priest, yet he was not a priest to the Israelites, and therefore did not stand in the relation of a priest to them; and because they had also priests of their own," to offer sacrifices, and perform all other parts of the sacerdotal office. This is Mr. Chubb's own argument, and if it proves that Melchizedek received no tithes, it will prove too that Jethro offered no sacrifice.

It is a difficulty with the learned, what was the real character of Melchizedek, and what his order of priesthood. But Mr. Chubb is above all difficulties: he tells you, as if no doubts had ever been raised about it, that he was priest in no other sense than as head of a tribe. But the reader must take it on his own word, and trust for a proof, till he is at leisure to find one. The story of Melchizedek, with the comment of the writer to the Hebrews on it, is a very obscure one; but obscure as it is, there is light enough to show that Mr. Chubb's notion of him is not only without but against authority.

That he was a person of great eminence is not to be doubted. Moses speaks of him with a respect which he does not show to the other princes of that country. The moment he mentions him, he takes care to distinguish him, not only as a king, but as a priest of the most high God; and as such he gave Abraham his blessing, an office of much solemnity amongst the ancients, with what levity soever Mr. Chubb may think fit to treat it; and judged (whether right or wrong is not to our purpose) to be attended with great efficacy. The Psalmist* speaks of him in a passage, which Mr. Chubb has not overlooked, with great marks of reverence; he makes him a type of the Son of God, and a priest of the same order. But what could lead him to do this, if he was a priest only as head of a tribe? Had this been the case, would it not have been much more natural to fetch his comparison from some of his own ancestors than from a stranger? Would he not rather have said, after the order of Noah, of Abraham, or any other of the patriarchal chiefs? But above all, what could tempt the writer to the Hebrews to take up the same comparison, who knew very well, and his readers knew, that Christ was not the head of his tribe, whatever Melchizedek was?

* Psalm cx. 4.

The five kings of Canaan mentioned in this chapter were perhaps, as Mr. Chubb supposes, priests as well as kings, and performed the ordinary office of priest in their own tribes and families. But Melchizedek was evidently a priest of a higher order, whose authority and jurisdiction extended probably over the whole province of Canaan; to whom it belonged to perform the extraordinary solemnities of religion, and to whom the inhabitants of that district brought their stated offerings and sacrifices, as the Israelites did to the high-priest under the law of Moses. Hence the great reverence and distinction with which Moses and the later writers of Scripture speak of him; hence the style of high-priest which the author to the Hebrews gives him; and hence the payment of tithes by Abraham. I do not mean to impose this on the reader as certain and undoubted fact founded on the letter of the history, but as a probable account only of one part of Melchizedek's character, agreeable at least to the representations of Scripture.

I shall close the argument with a remark on one point more that Mr. Chubb has started in the course of the debate. He seems to think that the Canaanites at that time, Melchizedek and his subjects only excepted, were idolaters; and that he was called a "priest of the most high God, because he paid his thank-offerings, not to the titular and fictitious deities of the Canaanites, but to the supreme God." I mention this not as material to the principal question, but to show how prone he is to advance things without warrant. For what ground has he for thinking that the Canaanites were in general idolaters at that period of time? Is it because they were idolaters five hundred years after in the days of Joshua? Bad as this reason is, I question whether he is able to give a better. Learned men have differed about the state of religion in the land of Canaan at the time of Abraham; and I shall not give my judgment in a point which history affords but a small light to determine. But I will venture to say that Mr. Chubb's notion is taken up at random, and that the country of which he speaks, and its neighborhood, were not so universally infected with idolatry as he seems to imagine. What does he think, for instance, of Abimelech's case?* There is a plain evidence that

* Genesis xx.

he knew the true God and adored him; but that he knew and worshipped any false god there is no evidence. The true God was known likewise to the king of Egypt; and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, though they were wicked enough to deserve the most signal judgment that ever was inflicted on a nation, are not charged with being idolaters. Abraham himself had not lived many years in the land of Canaan: he left his own country by the command of God, because it was corrupted with idolatry; and perhaps a good reason is not easy to be assigned why he should change it for another equally infected.

And now Mr. Chubb may re-consider, if he please, the case of Abraham and Melchizedek, and he may perhaps find reason to abate somewhat of that sufficiency which he is so forward to betray. The next time he thinks of declaring war against patriarchs, Apostles, and the learned of former and later times, I would advise him in the first place to be well assured of his own strength, and come better qualified for the combat. For my own part, it is, I confess, a matter of no small surprise to me to see him dictating with such a poverty of argument against the authority of Jews and Christians, as well ancient as modern, in the interpretation of a passage which he had not well considered, and which it is plain he did not understand.

ESAU AND JACOB.

In God's government, both of the moral and the natural world, we meet with many appearances that are beyond the comprehension of the ablest philosophers; and yet no man that believes a God makes any doubt of ascribing all to the direction of infinite wisdom. In like manner, in the history of God's providence it is reasonable to expect some difficulties, which for the same reason are no just objections against the authority of that history. In fact we find a multitude of circumstances and events in the history of Providence, which we know not

well how to account for, and of which indeed we are no judges. When one man or one nation is appointed for the execution of some purpose of Providence, if it happens in our own times, we are not competent judges of the propriety of that designation; and much less so when it happened in some remote period of time, and nothing is left but some short records of history to direct our judgments. Jacob was chosen to do the work of God rather than his elder brother Esau; and I question not but the choice was wisely made. Suppose it should appear that Esau had the larger share of virtue; as God did not reject him for his virtue, nor prefer Jacob for the want of it; it hurts not the credit of the history. Jacob might, notwithstanding, be the fitter person on the whole for this particular service. As we have not and cannot have a complete view of the case, it is impossible to form an adequate judgment of the matter. The credit of the history stands on the same bottom it did before, and this circumstance (supposing it true) contributes nothing to the weakening of it.

Mr. Chubb has declared himself of another opinion. He thinks that Esau was a better man than Jacob, and ought therefore to have been preferred, as heir of the promises made to Abraham. What poor reasoning is this! and on how partial a view of things is it founded! Judah might too, for what I know, have less merit than some other of the sons of Jacob; and Ahaz and Manasseh, through whom the promised blessing was conveyed, were certainly more vicious than many others of the tribe of Judah. But what is all this to the purpose? The question is not who had more personal merit, Esau or Jacob; but whether Esau's posterity, or Jacob's, was the most proper on the whole to be instruments of conveying the promised blessings to mankind. Is Mr. Chubb a judge of this question? I hope he has not the vanity to think he is, nor the rashness to attempt it.

The sons of Jacob were a stubborn and stiff-necked generation; but is there any reason to believe that the sons of Esau would have shown less perverseness? The former were guilty of idolatry and rebellion against God; but have we any just grounds for supposing that the other in the same circumstances

would have been less guilty? In short, such questions as these are not for us to determine; and to attempt it is at best impertinent and presumptuous.

Take the matter a little higher, and see how the argument will stand in another view. Man fell by sin from the hopes to which he was created, and God promised in his good time to restore him by the seed of the woman. The promise was renewed to Abraham in fuller and clearer terms; and the promised seed was limited to his posterity by Isaac, and afterwards to the posterity of Jacob by Judah and David. In the fulness of time the great restorer came and fulfilled the promises of God to mankind. Are we now to reject his pretensions of being the promised seed, because Jacob, one of his ancestors, was in some instances covetous and dishonest? Or is the redemption through him of the less benefit to mankind, because in the line of descent from Jacob to Joseph and Mary, there happened to be some bad men?

If God be sometimes said to make use of bad men to serve the ends of his providence, what is there unreasonable in it, or unworthy of a wise Being? It may afford little philosophers matter for cavil, but is no just occasion of offence to candid minds. It is no argument that he favors vice, but it is a great argument of his wisdom that he can turn the wickedness of man to good account in the general government of the world. He does not by an act of power give men dispositions which they had not, but applies such as they have to his own wise purposes.

A man of more uniform virtue than David might perhaps have been found amongst the tribes of Israel, to be set at the head of that people. He was not preferred to his brethren, or to the princes of Israel, because he was without faults; for it is certain he was guilty of some crimes of the highest order. He was no doubt advanced to that high station because he had talents for government, on the whole the best suited to the circumstances of the times. He had in general a great zeal for the love of God, which his predecessor had unhappily neglected, to the ruin of himself and the great injury of his people and posterity. He had felt the extremes of good and bad fortune, and carried himself in each with a just moderation. He

had prudence, activity, resolution, and all other talents requisite for managing a fickle, mutinous, and headstrong people.

When one person or people is selected from the rest of mankind, to carry on some great design in the government of the world, it is absurd to suppose that they are chosen for their own sakes, that they must needs have more personal merit than their neighbors, and that they are thus distinguished as the favorites of heaven.

All that can be said is, that they are the fittest, all things considered, to be employed in that service, without doing violence to the general laws of nature. Salmanezer was chosen to chastise the Israelites, and Nebuchadnezzar soon after to execute vengeance on the tribe of Judah; but they are not therefore to be considered as the favorites of heaven. It is not to be imagined that either their personal virtue or their particular mode of religion recommended them to God to be the ministers of his vengeance. It was their vicinity to Judea, and the great power and dominion they had acquired, which made them most proper for this service, without turning things out of their ordinary course.

Jacob and his posterity were chosen to be instruments in the hands of God for conveying the promised blessings to mankind; but the Scripture says, and common sense says, they were not chosen for their own sakes. Why then is it objected to us that they were perverse and stiff-necked? as if the share they had in doing the work of God was considered by us as a reward of their virtue. I doubt not but the part they had to act in the grand scene was wisely assigned them; and let Mr. Chubb show (if he is willing to contest it) that there would have been more wisdom in giving it to the sons of Ishmael or of Esau.

Jacob might have his faults as well as some others mentioned in the Bible history, who were nevertheless employed in the service of God; and a defender of Scripture is under no necessity of dressing him out as a blameless character. But Mr. Chubb has drawn him in such odious colors, and at the same time has given so favorable a picture of Esau, that there is good reason to suspect he has not examined and reported with that candor which he professes. Let us then reconsider the case; and restore, if we can, the patriarch's character to

that degree of credit which it has held in the world for so many ages.

The fate of Esau and Jacob was in part foretold by God, whilst they were yet in their mother's womb. 'The children struggled together within her: and she said, if it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger.'*

The struggling of the infants in their mother's womb was an extraordinary incident, and the answer of God shows it had an extraordinary meaning. It prepares us to expect some contention between them or their posterity; and we are given to understand that the younger should prevail in the conflict. What was to be the subject of the contention, and wherein the superiority of the younger should consist, will appear in the course of this inquiry.

The two brothers were very different in their dispositions; Esau was rough and active, and his chief pleasure and employment was hunting. Jacob, on the other hand, was of a softer and more retired temper, and applied himself altogether to the care of his father's cattle and the business of the family. The first thing we meet with in their history that is remarkable, is Esau's selling his birthright to Jacob. And here the prophecy began in part to be explained and fulfilled, that 'the elder should serve the younger.' The sale of the birthright, and the consideration given for the purchase, are thus related in the history. 'And Jacob sod pottage; and Esau came from the field, and he was faint. And Esau said to Jacob, feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: Therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do me? And Jacob said, swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink,

* Genesis xxv. 22. 23.

and rose up, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.'*

To explain this extraordinary transaction, it will be necessary to inquire what it was that passed by this bargain from the elder to the younger. What were the special rights and privileges of the first-born in that age and country is not agreed amongst the learned. And indeed how can it with any certainty be determined, when there is little or nothing in the history to direct us? But to Mr. Chubb nothing is difficult or obscure. He lays it down without scruple, as if it had been a point never controverted, that the birthright thus conveyed was only a right to a larger share of the father's inheritance. That the first-born was intitled to a double portion of goods under the law, is certain;† but will it follow that this was the case so many ages before the law? What were the laws of inheritance in the country where Isaac resided is intirely unknown to us; but whatever they were, Isaac and his family could not be subject to them. They were but sojourners, and lived there only on sufferance: they were under no regular established polity, but one single independent family, subject in all things to the direction of the Lord, whose will and pleasure was probably the sole law of inheritance. Thus Abraham, though he had many sons, gave his whole substance to Isaac. 'He gave all that he had unto Isaac,' and to the rest he 'gave gifts, and sent them away.'‡

But by whatever rule the inheritance of temporal goods was regulated, the birthright purchased by Jacob was probably not of a temporal nature. For what need was there of a prophecy previous to the birth of the two brothers, and what need was there for Moses to be so careful in recording the conveyance of it to the younger, in consequence of that prophecy, if it was no more than a right to a double share of the goods at his father's death? The history is silent as to any such division of the inheritance at the death of Isaac; though it is the opinion of some writers, on the authority indeed of a doubtful text, that Esau carried off the whole.

The Rabbinical writers, and some learned men on their au-

* Genesis xxv. 29. &c. † Deut. xxi. 17. ‡ Genesis xxv.

thority, take the birthright to be the *jus sacerdotii*, or that the priesthood was at least one great article of the birthright; relying, I am afraid, rather on tradition than any certain warrant of Scripture.* I find nothing to countenance this opinion in the history of the patriarchal families, from Noah down to Jacob. Whilst the family kept together, the father had most probably all authority, both spiritual and temporal; and when it came to branch out into different divisions and settlements, the priesthood was divided too; the head of every family, whether an elder or a younger brother, taking on himself the exercise of the sacerdotal office. And there is no question but Esau, after the sale of the birthright, was as truly a priest in his own family, and in his possession of Mount Seir, as Jacob was over his family in the land of Canaan.

The notion then of the birthright being a larger portion of the patrimony, or the *jus sacerdotii*, not being supported by proper evidence; it still remains to be inquired what it was, and wherein it consisted. For this purpose it will be necessary to look back to the call of Abraham.

'Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.'† The promise of God was renewed, and more particularly explained, after the birth of Ishmael. 'Behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations;—and I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan.'‡

* See the slender pretences for this opinion, though countenanced by some very great names, confuted by Spencer de Leg. Heb. lib. i.

† Genesis xii. ‡ Chap. xvii. 4. 6. &c.

Ishmael indeed was not to be the heir of these promises made to Abraham. Sarah was to have a son in her old age, with whom God promised to establish his covenant. But Abraham was still solicitous of procuring some blessing for Ishmael. 'And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard thee; behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: Twelve princes shall he beget; and I will make him a great nation; but my covenant will I establish with Isaac.'* These promises to Ishmael and Isaac are repeated and confirmed, chap. xxi. 12. 13. and chap. xxii. 17. 18.

If now you take the several promises to Abraham and Isaac to be merely temporal, what is there more in them than what was promised to Ishmael? Isaac was to be fruitful and multiply exceedingly; and so was Ishmael: kings were to come out of Isaac, and Ishmael was to beget princes; and the one was to become a great nation as well as the other. In the blessing given to Isaac, the promise of the land of Canaan indeed is a specialty, whilst the promise to Ishmael is left in general terms, that he should be a great nation, and beget princes. But this makes a difference only in the language, and not in the substance of the blessings; for they were still both of them temporal, only the one was specified and limited to the land of Canaan, and the other left at large. If there was no other difference, the son of the bondwoman had the advantage of the right heir; for he and his posterity became a great and numerous people, and were lords of a large territory in their own right, many ages before the descendants of Isaac had any certain possession, and whilst they were sojourners and servants in a strange land.

But there is one thing peculiar to the blessing of Isaac, from whence its superior value must needs be derived. God established his covenant with him 'for an everlasting covenant,

* Genesis xvii. 18. &c.

that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed.' Can this peculiarity arise only from Isaac's posterity possessing the land of Canaan? Were all nations blessed merely by their being masters of that country? Did the unfortunate inhabitants of Canaan, who were expelled and destroyed, did the many nations that bordered on the wilderness, and opposed the march of the Israelites, or in short did any race of men, whether nigh or distant, derive a blessing from this circumstance in a temporal sense? There is a sense, and a very emphatical one, in which all the nations of the earth were blessed in the seed of Isaac; but in supposing their settlement in the land of Canaan was a blessing to all nations, there is evidently none.

The covenant then established with Abraham and Isaac was of a complex kind, and consisted of two principal parts, or two distinct covenants; the one of a temporal nature, a promise of the land of Canaan, the other an everlasting covenant, by which all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. In the first part there is nothing peculiar to Isaac, more than was promised to Ishmael, and afterwards to Esau; it is from the second part that the peculiarity arises.

Go on to the blessings given by Isaac to his two sons, and you will see how this covenant descended. Their share of temporal blessings was much the same: he gave Esau the 'dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth,' as well as Jacob. The advantage in Jacob's blessing is, that he should be 'lord over his brethren,' and that his 'mother's sons should bow down to him;' and the only limitation in Esau's is, that he should serve his brother. And this subjection was not to continue; for a time would come when he should 'break the yoke from off his neck.' But was this a personal subjection of Esau to his brother? See what passed at the interview between them, whilst their father was yet living; consider the state of Esau and his sons after the death of Isaac;* and you will find that it was quite otherwise. Was it then a subjection of Esau's posterity to that of Jacob? Neither could this be the case.

The descendants of Esau were a great and powerful nation, whilst Jacob's were slaves to the king of Egypt. They were

* Genesis xxxvi.

secured by the express command of God from the insults of the Israelites in their passage to the promised land,* and were not subject to them till the reign of David.† And this state of subjection continued not long; they shook off the yoke in the reign of Jehoram,‡ and were soon strong enough to insult Israel in their turn.§ But this small circumstance does by no means come up to the emphatical language of the blessing. When Isaac tells Jacob that he should be lord over his brethren, and that his mother's sons should bow down to him; and when he tells Esau that he should serve his brother; can it be imagined that nothing more was intended than the prediction of a short subjection of the Edomites to the kings of Judah at a great distance of time?

The special advantage therefore in the blessing given to Jacob cannot be understood of a temporal advantage. Look into the following chapter, and you will see more distinctly what was intended by it. When Isaac found that he had given Jacob the special blessing without intending it, he sent him away to Laban, and once more confirmed it to him. 'God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayst be a multitude of people; and give the blessing of Abraham to thee, and to thy seed with thee.' Go on to the 13th verse, and you will see this blessing confirmed by God himself. 'And the Lord said, I am the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth.—AND IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED.' What therefore can the peculiar clause in Jacob's blessing import but the special covenant made with Abraham?

You see then in what manner the special covenant descended from Abraham to Isaac, and from Isaac to Jacob. Isaac was made heir of the covenant, by the appointment of God, in preference to his elder brother Ishmael, and Jacob in preference to Esau. What then could the birthright be, but a right to the benefit of this covenant? For this only was the peculiar

* Deut. ii. † 2 Sam. viii. 14. ‡ 2 Chron. xxi. 2 Kings viii. 20. 22. § 2 Chron. xxviii. 17.

right and advantage which Isaac had as heir (*primogeniti loco*) more than Ishmael, and Jacob more than Esau.*

Isaac, without question, made the promises of God to his father Abraham a frequent subject of exhortation and instruction to his two sons. In what sense he understood and explained them is not necessary to inquire. If he explained them in their full extent, how corrupt must Esau's heart be, and how great his impiety, in so readily setting them to sale? If he understood them to be no more than a right to the land of Canaan, which is the least he could understand by them, is it not enough to justify the writer to the Hebrews in calling him profane for despising the gift of God.

Selling the birthright for a trifle was an aggravation of his crime. He came home from hunting fatigued and hungry; but can it be imagined that nothing else was to be had in the family to satisfy his hunger but Jacob's pottage? Is it likely, as Mr. Chubb supposes, that he should think himself reduced to this alternative, either to purchase a mess of pottage on his brother's terms, or starve? Jacob's demand of the birthright has an abrupt appearance in the history, and Esau's ready compliance is not less remarkable. It is not likely that this was their first conversation on the subject. Esau, we may suppose, had given frequent intimations of the little value he set on it; and

* To this it may be objected that Esau himself distinguished between the birthright and the blessing, chap. xxvii. verse 36. and charges Jacob with depriving him of both. 'Is he not rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing.' But might not Esau imagine that he had not full power to make over the birthright to his brother, and that the conveyance was void till it was confirmed by Isaac? And will not this supposition account for the great anxiety which Rebekah showed to procure the blessing for Jacob, though he had purchased the birthright, so far as Esau had a power to sell it? But whatever Esau thought of the blessing, it was evidently the same thing with the birthright: for it is plain Isaac intended it for the first-born. And the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, notwithstanding Esau's distinction, if I mistake not, took it in this light, chap. xii. 16. 17. I pretend not to dictate to the judgment of others; but all circumstances considered, to me (I confess) it is a clear point.

Jacob had as often discovered an inclination to have it transferred to him. Taking this to be the case, there is no reason to wonder at the seeming abruptness and suddenness of the bargain. 'And Esau said, feed me with that same pottage;' and Jacob said, 'sell me thy birth-right;' that is, "transfer to me that interest for which you have expressed so much indifference, and your request shall be granted." 'And Esau said, I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright do me?' that is, not as Mr. Chubb affects to understand it, "I am in the article of death, and nothing can save my life but this pottage;" but, "human life is short, and I have not long to enjoy it; the seed of our father Abraham must be servants in a strange land four hundred years, before they can inherit the land of promise; it is impossible for me to receive any benefit as heir of the promise; why then should I keep a birthright that must be useless to me?" Take it in this view, and the whole transaction appears natural and probable; Jacob's demand is not so unreasonable as Mr. Chubb supposes, and Esau's compliance sufficiently criminal.

What shall we say then to the harsh and abusive language which Mr. Chubb so liberally bestows on Jacob? "That he shut up the bowels of compassion on his brother with a hard-heartedness not ordinarily to be met with;—that he cast about him to see what advantage to make of his distress;—that his covetousness was immeasurable, his avarice boundless, and his impudence consummate." What is all this but mere declamation? words of great sound and very little sense, as they are here applied? Where is the impudence, the avarice, the hardness of heart, Mr. Chubb so pathetically complains of? Nowhere but in his own imagination. The history, when interpreted with common sense and candor, is clear of them all.

The next thing worthy of notice in the history of Esau and Jacob is the blessing given them by their father.—'When Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, my son: and he said unto him, behold, here am I. And he said, behold now, I am old, and I know not the day of my death: now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; and make me sa-

very meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.'* Rebekah overheard Isaac giving these orders to Esau, and discovered it to Jacob; she commanded him to disguise himself like his brother, and receive the blessing in his stead.—'My son, obey my voice, according to that which I command thee: go now to the flock, and fetch me two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savory meat for thy father, such as he loveth: and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.' Jacob followed her instructions, the plot succeeded, and Isaac gave him the blessing.

Mr. Chubb, the reader may imagine, could not let slip so lucky a topic of declamation and abuse; neither the mother nor the son were spared on so inviting an occasion. "Rebekah is the projector of the fraud, and puts her son on playing the trickster with his father and brother; and Jacob, for his part, covers himself with dissimulation as with a cloak, is a thorough-paced liar, and sticks at nothing." Be it as Mr. Chubb supposes; Rebekah is the projector of a fraud, and Jacob a dissembler. Jacob was a man, and subject like other men to the frailties of human nature. He dissembled in this case, and the historian has very honestly reported the whole scene of dissimulation. But did Mr. Chubb never hear of any person, whose disposition and practice were in general upright, guilty nevertheless of being a dissembler in one instance of his life? Or, to carry the matter a little farther, is no allowance to be made to a man that dissembles only to secure a right? If Jacob's title was not yet complete, Esau's was forfeited in equity at least; for he had already consented to part with it. An interest of such importance, backed with the express commands of a mother, are weighty considerations. She commanded, and he obeyed; but how did he obey? not without remonstrating with great abhorrence, though a valuable claim was at stake, against deceiving his father. 'Peradventure my father will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse on me, and not a blessing.' Rebekah's reply is strong and peremptory; 'On me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice.'

* Genesis xxvii.

All consequences with regard both to God and man she took on herself, and all she required of him was instant obedience.

What now if we should go one step farther, and suppose that Jacob took the commands of his mother to be something more than the suggestions of her own mind? In spite of his remonstrances, he found they were peremptory, and persisted in with a confidence that would naturally incline him to this opinion; and his declaring to Isaac that God had favored him in his search after the venison,* looks as if he thought that God was not unconcerned in it. He knew that God had sometimes vouchsafed to manifest himself to her. It had been revealed to her, before the birth of her sons, that 'the elder should serve the younger;' and she let Jacob, no doubt, into the secret of this prophecy. He might not perhaps at that time thoroughly understand it; but it was enough to make him attentive to the birthright, and the disposition of the promises made to Abraham. Hence his inclination to obtain the birthright, and hence the solicitude of his mother about procuring him the blessing. He succeeded in both, and God confirmed to him the title and possession.†

> Nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
> Inciderit—

is a good rule in divinity as well as in poetry. I am not

* Ver. 20.

† Consider Isaac's conduct in this affair, and it may possibly furnish something farther in Jacob's favor. He sent Esau to hunt venison, with an intention at his return of giving him the blessing; but Jacob came by stealth and in disguise, and received it in his stead. When Esau returned and demanded the blessing, Isaac was all astonishment: 'he trembled exceedingly,' and yet confirmed the blessing to Jacob; 'I have blessed him, yea and he shall be blessed.' Soon after this he blessed him a second time, and sent him to Padan-aram. Do you think Isaac had no sense of what he did, when the case came to be explained to him? He knew without question the nature of a fraud, and what the guilt of a son was, who should dare without reason to impose a cheat on his father. But all this notwithstanding, he discovers no displeasure at Jacob, he treats him with the tenderness of a father, provides for his future well-being, and confirms to him the blessing of Abraham. All this is unaccountable, unless you will suppose he saw, or fancied he saw, the hand of Providence working in favor of Jacob.

bound to make Jacob's a perfect character, or to make Providence answerable for all his actions. If the reader thinks him a dissembler, let him be a dissembler. But if on the other hand he finds reason to believe that the hand of God was in this transaction, or that Jacob at least was persuaded that it was so, I desire him to consider how far in this case Jacob's morality may be chargeable.

If we follow Jacob to his uncle Laban, we shall find fresh matter of complaint against him. His contract for wages was, in Mr. Chubb's opinion, another instance of fraud and injustice. "His proposal, to appearance, was fair and equitable; whereas, in truth, it was an artful contrivance to gather the best of Laban's cattle to himself, under the appearance of justice and honesty.—As was his covetousness, so was his craft, inexhaustible. Whilst he was in Canaan, his wits were employed in making his market on the fortune of his brother: and when he came to Padan-aram, the same kind of craft was exercised in draining the blood out of the veins of his uncle Laban."

The worst that can be said is, that he over-reached Laban in the contract. When it was made, he kept to the letter of it; and in the event it turned out greatly to his advantage. But one circumstance there is which Mr. Chubb has prudently (or shall I say, knavishly) concealed from his reader; and that is, the long and faithful services of Jacob, the vast increase of Laban's substance under his care and management, and the cruel and injurious treatment he received in return. This makes a wide difference in the case. Double-dealing with an honest man that has not offended you, is defensible on no principles; but redressing an injury by outwitting a knave, who is above law, is not inconsistent with reason or justice.

On Jacob's first application to Laban, he received him kindly;* he offered him wages for his service; but so far was he from being greedy of gain, that he refused to accept any. He only requested his younger daughter in marriage, and consented on that condition to a seven years' service. The term expired, but the condition was forgotten; the eldest daughter, by a knavish stratagem, was imposed on him for the youngest;† he was com-

* Ch. xxix. 13. &c. † Ibid. 23.

pelled to take to his bed a woman he disliked, and forced to undergo another seven years' bondage, for one who was by contract and affection already his own. When this term was ended, being tired and worn out with hard service under an unjust and ungenerous master, he demanded his dismission.* He wanted not to be enriched at Laban's expense, but required only his wives and children, whom he had dearly purchased, and with them to return to his own country in peace. Laban was alarmed at this unexpected resolution of Jacob. He had found him to be an able and a faithful steward, by whose diligence and integrity he had been raised from small circumstances to great affluence and plenty.† He had no mind to part with so gainful a servant, and left no methods untried to dissuade him from his resolution; he intreated him, complimented him for his past services, offered to keep him on his own terms, and prevailed on him in the end to continue in his service. If he was used unkindly when he served without wages, it is no wonder he fared no better when his employment came to be profitable. New contracts were often made and as often broke, and his wages were changed ten times. His wives were treated not as daughters, but as aliens, and were deprived even of their lawful dower. What was to be done in these circumstances? and how was a man to be dealt with who was both offender and judge? If Jacob had a knave to deal with, he had reason to act with caution; and if he had been deprived of his right by violence, I see no reason why he might not recover it by craft.

But interpreters, I think, are not agreed in ascribing this wholly to Jacob's own policy and invention. The history carries in it an air of God's special regard and protection of Jacob; and Laban himself was persuaded that God had blessed him for Jacob's sake.‡ In reciting to his wives the advantage he had made of the contract for wages; 'Your father,' says he, 'hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times, but God suffered him not to hurt me;—God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.'§ Some readers perhaps

* Chap. xxx. 25. † Verse 30. ‡ Verse 27.
§ Chap. xxxi. 7. 9.

will not look on these merely as words of course, as intended only to express the increase of Jacob's substance in a natural way; and the method used by him to affect the conception of the cattle, may perhaps be thought an argument in their favor. Instances have indeed been brought from natural history to show that the color of the young was the effect only of natural causes, and I have no inclination at present to dispute it. But in the mean time it may be worth considering whether, in case the same experiment were again to be tried, it would be attended with the same success.

I have laid the case fairly before the reader, and he may now judge for himself. But whatever judgment he makes of this one circumstance, I doubt not but he will agree with me on the principal points in question:—that Jacob, all things considered, in his whole commerce with Laban, acted a faithful, a diligent, and a prudent part; and Laban an ungrateful, ungenerous, and cruel one.

I have no inclination to enter farther into Esau's character, and officiously to blacken it with putting false glosses on his words and actions, as Mr. Chubb has done to Jacob's. His history indeed is but short; but there is enough to justify what the Apostle to the Hebrews says of him. His despising the promises of God is certainly no argument of his piety; and his disposing of himself in marriage against his parents' judgment, and to their great grief and concern, is no great sign of his duty and obedience; and the resolution he took of murdering his brother betrays a violence of temper that is not very consistent with a truly good character. Whilst Jacob was at a distance, his resentment cooled; and after twenty years' absence, though he was full of apprehensions from Esau's desperate and revengeful temper, he was received with the regard and affection of a brother. After this he might be, for what I know, the good-natured man Mr. Chubb represents him. Here the history breaks off, and I shall not, in imitation of Mr. Chubb, make history for the sake of abusing him.

As to Jacob, he might have his faults as well as his virtues; his being heir of the covenant did not exempt him from the common infirmities of human nature. But let the reader carefully compare his history with Mr. Chubb's comment, and I

doubt not but he will be convinced that a want of honesty lies not on the patriarchs, but on the commentator. The epithets he is pleased to give him belong to none but a villain of the first magnitude: such as "avaricious without bounds, consummately impudent, without bowels of compassion, hard-hearted beyond example, his craft inexhaustible, sticking at nothing to gain his ends, a trickster, a dissembler, a thorough-paced liar, and the like." Abuse is not very becoming whether of the dead or the living: there is a decency to be observed even in just reproaches; but such a profusion of illiberal language without reason, against history, and where the interest of religion too is concerned, is altogether intolerable.

When Esau declined accepting his brother's present, Mr. Chubb very pertinently puts the case whether a Christian bishop should refuse a better see if it were offered to him. When the Lord commanded Jacob to return to his own house, he says, "who this lord was the Lord only knows." When Jacob vowed a tenth part of his substance to God, "this article, he judges, might be descended from priestly parents, as priests of all sorts endeavor to persuade the world that what is given to them is offered to God." And when the angel is said to have appeared to Jacob after his interview with his brother, Mr. Chubb enters into a grave inquiry whether the Scripture does not suppose angels to be male and female. But what impertinent and low buffoonery is all this? as void of all humor, whatever he thinks of it, as it is of decency and common sense. And I mention it only to show what an inclination he has, if he had but talents, to become a railer and a buffoon.

Let us now look back and consider what is the principal scope of Mr. Chubb's dissertation on the history of Esau and Jacob. It is to prove that Esau was a better man than Jacob. The merits of the proof have already been weighed and found wanting. But supposing the point has been proved, what is the consequence? Why the inference is, that Jacob ought not to have been preferred to Esau. But how was he preferred? He and his posterity, it seems, were the peculiar people of God; and Esau and his posterity were not so. But in what sense and for what purpose were they God's peculiar people? Was it for their own sakes, and on account of their own personal

merit? Nothing can be more senseless and absurd, more foreign both to reason and Scripture. A bad man may be preferred as fitter, all circumstances considered, to do the work of Providence in some cases than a good one; but is this a preference of merit, and an instance of personal favor?

But after all what personal advantages had Jacob over Esau? He lived twenty years in a slavish dependence on a bad master, 'consumed in the day by drought, and in the night by frost; and his sleep departed from his eyes.'* Esau in the mean time lived in ease and affluence, master of a great substance and a numerous family. He obtained a settlement in Mount Seir whilst Isaac was yet living, and God confirmed his title to that country; he was father of a numerous race of princes, his immediate descendants, and laid the foundation of a great kingdom. Jacob too had a great substance in cattle, the chief riches of that age; but neither he nor his posterity had any fixed habitation for several generations. His life, with some good circumstances, had a great mixture of trouble in it. The loss of his beloved wife in the prime of her age, the loss of his favorite child with some circumstances of aggravation, and many other domestic troubles, must have been a great allay to his quiet. He had in short no great quiet till towards the close of life, when his appetite for enjoyment must in a good measure be impaired, and even this in a condition of uncertainty and dependence.

On the whole, if I have given the true characters of the two brothers, there is an end of the dispute, and Mr. Chubb has spent fifty pages very unprofitably. If Mr. Chubb has stated the case fairly, and Esau had really the greater share of virtue, let it be remembered too that he had a greater share of temporal blessings; if he had merit, his merit was rewarded, and Providence stands acquitted.

* Genesis xxxi. 11.

BALAAM.

When the Israelites arrived on the borders of Moab, the inhabitants were greatly alarmed, and sent messengers to the Moabites to consult about their common safety. Balak the king of Moab was sensible that he was not strong enough to meet them in the field. Superstition therefore was called in to supply the place of force, and Balaam was sent for by joint consent to curse the Israelites.

This man was a priest and prophet of Mesopotamia, and his interest with the gods was thought to be such, that 'whomsoever he blessed was blessed, and whomsoever he cursed was cursed.'* A curse pronounced with the proper formalities, it was imagined, would be fatal to the Israelites; it was supposed to withdraw from them the protection of the gods, and to enable the king of Moab with an inferior force 'to smite them and drive them out of the land.'†

There is some obscurity in the story of Balaam as related by Moses, and the enemies of revelation have taken advantage of that obscurity to ridicule the historian. Mr. Chubb follows the herd, and has once more repeated what has often been said by others, and as often confuted; "that Balaam resolved, and made good his resolution, not to deviate from his duty either by excess or defect; that he would do neither more nor less than as God should direct;—that his behavior and conduct were amiable, and have not been exceeded by many of those whose names have been entered on record, either in sacred or profane

* Numb. xii. 6.

† Ib. This horrid superstition of cursing an enemy, in order to destroy him, was not confined to this age or country. When the great champion of the Philistines went forth to engage with David, he began with cursing him in the name of his gods, probably in a solemn form of words usual on such occasions. We find a like practice observed by the Romans in the florishing times of the Commonwealth; as well against cities besieged, as against armies in the field. The solemnities observed for that purpose at the siege of Carthage, together with the form of words used for the evocation of the gods, and for devoting the city and inhabitants to destruction, is still preserved in Macrobius: Saturn. lib. iii. c. 9.

history; that his character and conduct were beautiful;—and that he was a great and good man."

Let us then examine the history, and see what matter it affords for this high strain of panegyrics on the character and conduct of Balaam. The elders of Moab and Midian were dispatched by Balak with a present in their hands. They declared to Balaam the occasion of their journey, and the request of the king of Moab; and he retired to his chamber to receive instructions from God. 'And God said unto Balaam, thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you. And the princes of Moab rose up and went to Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.'*

The answer of God, you see, is peremptory, 'thou shalt not go;' and the reason immediately follows, which is not less peremptory, 'thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed.' Balaam delivered only a part of this answer to the ambassadors, and this part only was reported to the king of Moab—'Balaam refuseth to come with us.' What now was Balak to understand by this answer? Balaam refused to come, but gave no reason for his refusal. Balak supplied the reason for himself, and imagined it was because he had not bid up to his price. With a resolution therefore to remove all objections on the part of Balaam, he sent a second embassy, consisting of princes, 'more in number, and more honorable† than the first,' and with offers more advantageous and tempting. Balaam knew that the answer of God on the first embassy was absolute, 'thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed.' He knew too, what he afterwards declared, 'that God was not a man that he should lie or repent.' Had he sent this answer complete, all misconstructions would have been prevented, and he would probably have heard no more of the king of Moab. Instead of this, he returned an answer of doubtful interpretation, and left Balak to give his own sense to it. What Balaam's reason was for curtailing the answer in so material a part, I shall not determine; but certain it is, it could not be a good reason.

* Numb. xxii. 12. 13. 14. † Verse 15.

But be this as it will, the ambassadors came a second time and renewed their solicitations to Balaam: they tempted him with all the wealth and honors which Balak had to bestow, and bid up to the extent of their commission. 'And Balaam answered and said, if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do more or less.' All this sounds well, had it been as religiously observed as it was solemnly professed. 'And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, if the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them, but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went.'*

There is something very extraordinary in this passage. Balaam has permission from God to go with the princes of Móab, and yet God's anger was kindled 'because he went.' God is not a capricious, but a just and unchangeable Being. To suppose him capable of giving orders, and then of being angry because those orders were obeyed, is impious and wicked; it is what the lowest heathen would not suppose even of the lowest of his gods. Moses, it is very certain, had better notions of the supreme God: he speaks of him at all times as a Being of wisdom, goodness, justice, and truth. To go about to prove this to any man that has ever looked into the Pentateuch, would be altogether impertinent. It is most evident from every part of it, and even from this very history, of which the story referred to is a part. This being a clear point, is it possible for this passage, as it stands in the English Bible, and in its obvious and literal sense, to come from Moses? Is it possible for him, in the compass of two or three verses, to charge such a contradiction on God as he could not have charged on the most capricious and arbitrary of his creatures? Let the reader turn this over in his thoughts, and I doubt not but it will be as evident to him as it is to me, that either the original or the translation must be faulty.

The commentators were sensible of the difficulty, and have endeavored to account for it. The general solution is, that the words in verse 20, which seem to imply a permission, are not

* Numb. xxii. 20. 21. 22.

serious, but ironical; and some think they were spoken in anger; *sunt verba indignantis*, says Lyra. If the reader is satisfied with this solution, I shall not dispute it with him; only let him remember that the irony, if it be an irony, is again repeated ver. 35. and is still misunderstood by Balaam, for he continued his journey notwithstanding.

But suppose the words importing a permission to be serious and not ironical, and see whether the words in ver. 22. that seem to contradict them, may not be reconciled with this supposition. These last words in our English version stand thus; 'and God's anger was kindled against Balaam because he went.' Other versions too give the same sense; but there is one word in the original that is not rendered in any translation, which may signify 'of himself,' or 'of his own head:' and the whole sentence, fully translated, would run thus: 'and God's anger was kindled against Balaam because he went of himself.' Look back to ver. 20. and you will see the permission is not absolute, but has a condition annexed. It is not absolutely, 'rise up and go;' but 'rise up and go, if the men come to call thee.' It should seem then that Balaam's crime was, not fulfilling the condition which God had injoined him; he was not guilty in going, but in going of himself without being called. This, I think, is a very learned author's* sense of the passage; and the construction and force he gives to the word that has been overlooked by the translators, seems to be well supported. But there is yet a material circumstance in which his interpretation of the text seems to fail; and that is, he has found out a condition where there is really none. It is not, 'go, if they shall come to call thee;' but 'if they are,' or, 'since they are come;' *quandoquidem venerunt*. Thus it is in the original, and the several translations agree in giving this sense to it.

The question then will still return; if God gave him leave to go, why was his anger kindled because he went? That God was angry merely because he went, as has been already observed, is absurd and impossible; and it was impossible for Moses to represent him as displeased without some better reason. The angel's rebuke to Balaam shows clearly that this was not in fact the ground of God's displeasure; and it intimates at the

* Dr. Shuckford's Connection, vol. iii. p. 133. and 314.

same time what the real ground was. 'And the angel of the Lord said unto him, behold I went out to withstand thee.' But why? Not because thou art going with the princes of Moab; but because 'thy way is perverse before me,' because thou goest with a perverse and corrupted heart. Had God's anger and the angel's opposition to him been occasioned by the mere act of going with the princes of Moab, his defence would have been a very obvious and a very just one, that he had express leave from God for what he was doing. Instead of this, he confesses his guilt, and submits himself to the angel's pleasure; 'I have sinned, I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me.'

You have then the true reason of God's anger at Balaam; not a random conjecture founded on mere possibilities, but a reason suggested by the plain text of the history, and consistent with Balaam's conduct throughout the whole transaction. The words in ver. 22. are to be understood and rendered, not 'because he went,' but 'because he went of himself,' with selfish and mercenary views: *eo quod abiisset ex aviditate;* as the Arabic translator renders it. If the present text will not carry this sense completely, some word must have been dropped by former copyists which has never since been restored. If you take the passage in any other light, you make God not only an arbitrary, but a trifling and whimsical being, such as Moses never did and never could represent him; and at the same time you leave some part of Balaam's conduct not to be accounted for. But consider it in this view, and the equity of God's proceeding stands clear of objections; and Balaam's character is consistent.

On the first application made to him by Balak, he concealed a part, and a material part of God's answer from the princes of Moab and Midian. When the second invitation came, backed with weightier considerations, his great forwardness to obey it was an argument that his eyes were dazzled with the golden prospect that was set before him, and that his virtue was not proof against a royal bribe. He set forward accordingly, big with the expectation of honors and riches, with a good inclination at least, if not a determined resolution of cursing 'whom the Lord had not cursed.' But the angel of the Lord met him

in the way to check his ambition, and to restrain, if possible, the motions of his rebellious heart. He injoined him strictly, after a severe reprimand, not to go one tittle beyond what he should receive in command from God. God had already declared his resolutions in regard to Israel; and he knew that his counsels were immutable. When therefore he met the king on the borders of Moab, he ought like a true prophet to have declared the will of God to him. But here the prophet was silent, and the king still left with hopes of obtaining a curse against his enemies. Balaam followed him to a mountain, from whence he might view the Israelites; he sought the Lord by prayer and sacrifice, and received a confirmation of his favor to his people Israel. Willing however to gratify the king's unreasonable humor, he removed to a second eminence, and then to a third, where the same solemnities were repeated, and the event was still the same.

What now was this solemn farce but mocking God, and importuning him to reverse what he knew to be irreversible? The same mercenary views that brought him to Balak, induced him thus to trifle with God. He was sensible from the beginning that he was restrained from doing Balak the service that was expected; but he flattered himself that the zeal he had shown might supply its place, and intitle him to the reward. His whole conduct seems to be a sort of trimming between his duty to God and his zeal for the king of Moab. The menaces of the angel, and the fear of instant punishment, kept him as much as possible within the letter of his commission; and the lust of lucre on the other hand made him flatter Balak with the hopes of obtaining impossibilities. After God had at three several times confirmed his regard to Israel, they parted, both equally disappointed; Balak in procuring a blessing for his enemies instead of a curse; and Balaam in losing the price of corruption.

Take the character of Balaam from a part of his history, (as Mr. Chubb has done,) from his own declarations of obeying God, and from the blessings given to Israel agreeably to those declarations; and there appears nothing worthy of blame in it. But take the whole of it together, as every writer ought to do, and as every honest writer will naturally do, and you see him

in a different light. There runs through the whole narration of Moses the air of a bad character. God, it is plain, was greatly displeased with him, and I have pointed out from the history what was the true ground of his displeasure; it was a perverse inclination he had to curse the Israelites, against the decrees of Providence, on the mercenary view of a reward from Balak.

If the reader is not yet satisfied that this was his crime, all doubt will be removed by an explicit testimony of Moses himself.* 'The Lord thy God (says he to the Israelites) would not hearken unto Balaam, but turned the curse into a blessing.' And Joshua, the constant attendant on Moses, and of equal credit with him, reports the same thing in the person of God himself; 'I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still, for I delivered you out of his hand.'† What can this imply less than a forward disposition in Balaam to curse the Israelites, in opposition to the immutable purpose of God?

When therefore St. Peter‡ says, that 'he loved the wages of unrighteousness;' and St. Jude,§ that 'he ran greedily after reward,' they are fully justified by the letter of Moses's history.‖ Indeed had the point been left doubtful, their testimony in quality of historians would have had great weight in clearing it; and in quality of Apostles, it must needs have been decisive.

When Balaam left Balak, his history breaks off; but we find one action more incidentally recorded of him,¶ as little to his advantage as any that have been yet mentioned. The solemn and repeated declarations of God in favor of Israel made no impression on his mind. Though he could not obtain a curse from God, there was still a possibility of carrying his point by tempting the Israelites to bring a curse on themselves. He tried the experiment, as it were, in defiance of the Almighty; and though it ended in the destruction of Balak and his allies, yet a great part of the Israelites were involved in their fate. He knew very well that the prosperity of that people depended

* Deut. iii. 5. † Ch. xxiv. 10. ‡ 2 Pet. xi. 15.

§ Ver. 11.

‖ Mr. Chubb charges both St. Peter and St. Jude with contradicting the history of Moses.

¶ Ch. xxxi. 16.

solely on their obedience to the law of God; the women of the country therefore were by his advice instructed to seduce them. They invited them to their sacrificial entertainments, betrayed them into acts of lewdness and idolatrous prostrations before the god of their country; the consequence of which was, they were visited by a plague from heaven, and 24,000 of them received the just reward of their lewdness and apostacy.

Their crime and punishment are related ch. xxv.; and in ch. xxxi. the history informs us that Balaam was the author of the plot. 'These (the Midianitish women) caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor; and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord.' You find the same fact referred to by St. John in the Revelations,* that he 'taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.'

Nothing can indicate a mind more impious and desperate than this last action of Balaam. But Mr. Chubb excuses all by declaring, in direct opposition to the history, that he had no share in the contrivance. "The people of Israel (he says) went among the Moabites and Midianites, and this introduced a familiarity betwixt them; and this gave the men of Israel an opportunity of debauching their young women, by gratifying their carnal desires on them: and then those girls in return inticed them to idolatry." As to Balaam, he was quite innocent. "The Israelites invented and fixed this calumny on him; thereby to excuse and justify their imbruing their hands in his righteous blood." A man must be hard driven indeed that has recourse to such a method as this of evading plain facts. Are not the crime and punishment of the Israelites consistent with the supposition of Balaam's being the contriver of both? And is there not the same authority for the one as for the other? How arbitrary then, and how insolent is it to admit one as fact, and reject the other as fiction, when both of them stand on the testimony of the same historian. This is not drawing characters from history, but making, perverting, and shaping history to characters already drawn.

* Ch. ii. 14.

This plot to insnare the Israelites bears so hard on the character of Mr. Chubb's hero, that he is resolved at all hazards to clear his hands of it. For this purpose he declares "that Balaam, who was well instructed in the principles of religion, and according to the prophet Micah was so much concerned for the well-being of Balak as to point out to him the only grounds of divine acceptance;—that he should, at the same time, in the same conversation, and in the same breath, basely and wickedly instruct Balak how to corrupt Israel, is a supposition so monstrously unnatural and absurd, as would have shocked the faith of Pope Pius himself."

I know of nothing more base and wicked, more unnatural and absurd, than for a writer, under a pretended love of truth, to pervert the minds of his readers with false history and bad reasoning. There is, I am afraid, a great deal of both in this paragraph. For where, I would fain know, does Balaam show such a pious concern for Balak? Mr. Chubb appeals to the prophet Micah,* but let me recommend to him to reconsider that passage, and give me good reason for ascribing the sentiments contained in it rather to Balaam than to the prophet himself. If he finds any authorities on his side, they pass for nothing; for a professed reasoner, I hope, will not give authority for argument. It is however incumbent on him to clear up this point, as he lays great stress on it for supporting the character of Balaam. For my own part, I have little doubt but the sentiments were delivered in the person of the prophet, and that Balaam had no share in them. All that we learn from the history is, that whilst Balaam was with Balak on the mountains of Moab, he made sacrifices, consulted God, and blessed Israel. What authority then has Mr. Chubb for asserting that his advice to pervert the Israelites was given at the same time, in the same conversation, and the same breath? In what verse and chapter does he find this parade of circumstances? The history is silent, and Mr. Chubb is silent too. He fouud it convenient to couple the facts together to prop a lame argument, and he hoped his readers would take it on his credit. The truth is, when Balaam had pronounced the last blessing on Israel, he

* Ch vi.

was dismissed in disgrace. His plot to betray them was evidently an after-thought, invented to recover the favor of Balak, and to merit at last the wages of unrighteousness.

See then the force of Mr. Chubb's argument to destroy the credit of the history, and to disculpate his hero. "Balaam was well instructed in the principles of religion, and therefore cannot be supposed guilty of so base and wicked an action." But is not Balaam's case the case of every wilful sinner? Do not all such offend against the light of their own minds? Did not Aaron make an idol for the children of Israel? Was not David an adulterer, and Solomon an idolater? And yet I suppose it will be granted that each of them was at least as well instructed in the principles of religion as Balaam.

I do not wonder to find Mr. Chubb employing his small stock of drollery on the story of the ass: it has been the sport of infidels and freethinkers ever since such a race of men existed in the world. He thinks that the whole story is fabulous and incredible; "that what the ass offered in excuse must needs have appeared to her master an aggravation of her fault; and that though the voice was man's voice, the reasoning was that of an ass." To say the truth, if we take the ass's reasoning as he has stated it, I can see nothing in it very illogical. I should think the long and faithful services of the creature was no improper circumstance to urge in excuse to her master for once offending him. Had Mr. Chubb reasoned no worse than the ass, his panegyric on Balaam would probably have passed without censure.

But was nothing more suggested than merely an excuse for tripping, when the ass demanded of her master, 'was I ever wont to do so unto thee?' Where were Balaam's eyes, where was his reason and conscience, when he could discern no meaning in this unusual scene of things? that a creature, which had for many years carried him with steadiness and safety, should now fail in so extraordinary a manner; at one time springing on a sudden out of the road, at another starting and crushing his foot against a wall, at a third falling under him, and at last expostulating with human voice? These were startling circumstances, considering the business he was about; and had not his heart been corrupted, and his eyes blinded with avarice

and ambition, must have appeared to be something more than accident. I am doubtful whether these considerations will have any weight with Mr. Chubb and his friends. I shall therefore suggest one thing more, that may perhaps better deserve to be considered.

What then if we suppose this whole transaction to be only a piece of scenery presented to him on his journey in a dream or vision ?* This was the usual method in which God revealed himself to his prophets; and the revelation is often recorded without distinguishing the manner of giving it, unless by some accidental circumstances that attended it. Interpreters seem to be agreed that God's instructions were in this manner delivered to Balaam; and the language of the history agrees very well with this supposition. When the first messengers came, they 'lodged with him that night;' and 'when he rose in the morning,' he gave them their answer. When they came a second time, it is expressly said that God came to Balaam by night; and the readiness and unconcernedness with which he entered into debate with the ass, looks more like a circumstance of a vision than a real fact.

When a point in history will admit of more constructions than one, it is a just rule to follow that which best agrees with the rest of the history, and is like to give least offence to the reader. Consider the story of the ass as a real fact, and you fall into some difficulties, which even serious men will perhaps not easily get over. Suppose it to be no more than a piece of scenery for Balaam's information and correction, and all difficulties vanish. You satisfy the doubts of sober minds, and at the same time stop the mouths of licentious scoffers.

* St. Peter alludes to this circumstance, (2 Ep. ii. 16.) and says, 'The dumb ass speakiug with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.' And these words, in the opinion of some learned men, necessarily suppose it to be a waking scene, and not the subject of a dream. Much might be said in answer to this were it necessary; but I shall only desire the reader to consider whether the words of St. Peter do not carry much the same force and propriety on one supposition as the other. The opinion here advanced is not a novelty and without authority; it is as old at least as Maimonides.

POSTSCRIPT.

Mr. Chubb's fourth dissertation carries the Bishop of Salisbury's name in the title; and a reader would naturally imagine it was a confutation of some leading doctrine in his lordship's sermon.* But the subject of the dissertation, however it happened, is quite foreign to the argument of the sermon.

The sermon opens with a short reflexion on a fact laid down in the text; and against this reflexion Mr. Chubb's argument pretends to be directed. The text says, the 'Israelites served the Lord all the days of Joshua,' &c.; and the reflexion on it is, 'thus far all is well.' And is not obeying God doing well? This, I think, is all that the words import; and this is a proposition which I hope will not be disputed. Against whom then, or against what, is Mr. Chubb's quarrel? Why, the fact laid down in the text, it seems, is not a real fact; the book of Joshua is a knavish performance; the Israelites were robbers and murderers, and consequently did not obey God. Well then, suppose they obeyed not God; will it follow that obeying God is not doing well? No, sure! This proposition stands as it did, unaffected by any speculations on the conduct of the Israelites. A Christian preacher that speaks to an assembly of Christians, supposes the truth and authority of Scripture, and appeals to and reasons from it as a common principle. Disputing the sense he gives to his principle, or his deductions from it, is something; but writing against the authority of the principle itself, is not writing against the preacher. Proving that the Israelites had no commission from God to expel the Canaanites, may affect the credit of the book of Joshua; but it affects not the reasoning of the Bishop of Salisbury's sermon.

* A sermon preached by the Bishop of Salisbury, at Salisbury, October 6, 1745. on occasion of the rebellion in Scotland. [See vol. iii. p. 473.]

How then came his name to be called into question? This perhaps will be explained in the next edition of the Dissertation.

There is a quaintness in the notion of writing a book against five monosyllables, which no doubt pleased the man's fancy; and there was, I am afraid, some pride in going out of his way (as he has done on other occasions) to show a little impertinence and ill manners to his superiors. He wanted to throw together a few common-place thoughts on the expulsion of the Canaanites, and could not forbear gracing his work with the name of a Christian prelate. He understood the trade of an author, and judged rightly that stamping his performance with some great name would give it a currency and promote its quicker circulation. There is indeed no reason why a great name should exempt a man from public censure; but it ought to exempt him from wanton trifling and impertinence, where there is no room or pretence for censure. But men will be men, and pride and conceit in little minds will break the bounds of decency and good manners; and the more so, when they are protected by their own obscurity.

The expulsion of the Canaanites (which is the subject of the fourth dissertation) is so stale a topic, and has been so lately canvassed on all sides, that it is somewhat strange Mr. Chubb could find no better entertainment for his readers. If he is content to repeat old objections, I am not fond of repeating old answers. I shall say but little on the subject, and refer the reader, for his farther satisfaction, to the defences of this part of Scripture, against Tindal, Morgan, &c.

The point seems to lie in a very short compass. Has God authority over his own creation or not? and has he a right to punish daring wickedness in this world? If he has, may there not be reasons of wisdom in some cases to exercise that right? to visit a dissolute, profligate people with the rod of his vengeance; to leave them a monument of his hatred to sin, and an example of terror to the rest of mankind? If the Canaanites were guilty in the degree they are represented in Scripture,* guilty of dishonouring God by the most abominable idolatries, and of disgracing human nature by the foulest immoralities;

* Levit. ch. xviii. and ch. xx. and elsewhere.

where lies the injustice in calling them to judgment? And if the constitution of the Hebrew government was peculiarly framed against the reigning idolatry and vices of the age, and that people were to be a standing instance of God's favor to true religion; is there any color of weakness, or is there not rather a great appearance of wisdom in executing the sentence by their hands?

It is to little purpose to talk of "weeping, bleeding, fainting, dying mothers, with infants torn from their breasts and trampled under foot; multitudes weltering in their blood, dying groans," &c. &c. This is the language of craft, speaking to the passions, not to the reason of men. If the measure of their iniquities was full, if they deserved punishment, and God had a right to punish, there remained yet another tribunal to correct all inequalities. If infants or a few innocent persons suffered, as will always be the case in general calamities, they were still in the hands of a merciful God, who disposed of them no doubt in a manner the most suitable to his wisdom and justice.

What effect the fate of the Canaanites had on the neighbouring nations is impossible to say, as there is little or nothing in the history to inform us. That it made some impressions on their minds is probable; and that this and other wonders they had seen made a strong impression on the Israelites is more than probable; for they 'served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel.'* In succeeding generations the impression grew weaker; and what their fathers only told them, was not received with so lively a sense as what was visible to the eye They were prone to idolatry; that is, they were apt like other men to catch the manners and fall in with the fashions and practices of their neighbors. But the case was then on record, and is so still; and serves as well for our admonition as it did for theirs. An attentive and serious reader will look over the history with a just abhorrence of vice and idolatry, and be more firmly fixed in his attachment to true religion.

* Judges ii. 7.

In commenting on the text just now cited, Mr. Chubb gives it as his opinion that the Israelites, who are said to 'serve the Lord all the days of Joshua,' &c. served him only in destroying the Canaanites; for that they were idolaters in their worship, and served other gods. Let us see then how the case stands.

When Joshua was grown old and near his death, he called the tribes of Israel together, and gave them his last advice and instructions;* he exhorted them to observe the whole law of God, and pressed them with great zeal and force to 'serve the Lord, and to put away the strange gods that were among them.' This same exhortation to put away the strange gods is once or twice repeated in the twenty-fourth chapter. And from hence Mr. Chubb thinks it very plain that they were even at that time guilty of idolatry, and serving strange gods. Suppose then that some few families had their favorite idols, and worshipped them in private, this surely will not amount to a national crime; the tribes in general might still be said to 'serve the Lord.' The people of this island are protestants, and serve God after the manner of protestants; and yet I am afraid we have too many amongst us of another persuasion.

But the truth is, Joshua's exhortation is given by way of caution and instruction, and not reproof. There was great reason to guard them, as Moses frequently did, against a crime to which he was sure they would be so strongly tempted by their neighbors. He knew there was a remnant of Canaanites still among them, and consequently strange gods among them; and to put away these gods, and to expel or destroy the inhabitants, was the tenure by which they were to hold their country. This was the subject of the angel's commission, Judges ii. not to reform any idolatrous practices of which they were then guilty; but to remind them that there was yet a remnant of inhabitants to be removed, 'and altars to be thrown down.'

Look over their history from their exit out of Egypt to their taking possession of the land of Canaan, and I believe you will find no instance of idolatry, except the case of the golden calf in the wilderness, and Peor the god of Midian; and yet the

* Joshua xxiii. and xxiv.

historian is very careful in recording their transgressions, and more especially those of the grosser kind. When they were settled in the land of Canaan, and the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, returned to their possession on the other side Jordan, they set up an altar as a testimony of their relation to the other tribes. But what was the consequence? The whole body of Israel was alarmed at the novelty, and prepared to give them a severe chastisement, on suspicion only that it might be intended for idolatrous purposes. The suspected tribes however cleared themselves, and all was easy. But observe in what manner the messengers addressed them on their supposed guilt. 'What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel? Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, but that ye must turn away this day from following the Lord?'*—Is this the language of idolaters, or the spirit of men who had strange gods among them?

The strange gods therefore which Joshua commanded to be put away were the gods of the Canaanites that still kept possession of their country. Let Joshua be his own interpreter, and the thing will be yet more evident. 'Keep and do,' says he, (chap. xxiii. verse 6.) 'all that is written in the book of the law of Moses.—Come not among these nations, these that remain among you, neither make mention of the name of their gods,' &c., 'but cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day.' Though he cautions them in this chapter, as he does in the next, not to serve strange gods; yet he clears them expressly from having as yet forsaken the Lord. The historian acquits them, and the reader will in justice acquit them too.

As the Bishop of Salisbury's name stands in the front of the Dissertation; that he might not be intirely forgotten, Mr. Chubb closes the whole with one remark on his sermon. The whole passage is extraordinary on several accounts. I shall give the reader a part of it, and in his own words. "If the Deity so moves and directs the understandings, the appetites, the passions and affections of men, as thereby to bring about those events that are called the works of his providence; if he raises up a spirit of pride, ambition,

* Joshua xxii. 16. &c.

and lust of power in Kouli-Khan, whereby to introduce wasting and desolation in the east; and rouses up the like turbulent passions in the French king, whereby to introduce the like calamities in the west, by way of correction and punishment for sin; and if (according to the Bishop of Salisbury's sermon lately published) by these secret springs of motion and action, or by this hand of Providence, things are so directed, that prosperity and adversity in this world are made to tally with and bear some proportion to men's virtues and vices, (supposing in such a state virtue and vice do subsist);—I say if this be the case, then, as this world cannot with any propriety be called a state of probation or trial, so a future retribution must of necessity be superseded."

If I understand this passage rightly, God is represented as the author of all events, as giving men new passions and appetites, directing and controlling their wills; and in short, as being the sole agent in the creation; and men as mere machines, the involuntary instruments of producing the effects which he has appointed. Hence it is that he queries, and queries justly, whether in such a state virtue and vice can subsist. And this dark plan of fatalism is imposed on the reader for the Bishop of Salisbury's plan of providence. It is a very weighty charge, and ought not to be admitted rashly. Where then is the line and page in which his lordship, or any other writer of sense has given this as a view of Providence? The reader will easily believe it is a charge which he is not able to support; but where is his honesty if he does not?

There are, without question, various methods in which God may overrule the passions, and defeat the counsels of men, without affecting the morality of human actions. It is not to be imagined that he gives them passions and dispositions which they had not, but directs such as they have to serve the ends of his providence. He may raise the elements to frustrate a wicked design, and quiet them to favor a good one. He may by secret and invisible means give success to an invasion, to chastise a guilty nation; and by like methods defeat it in the end, without hurting the free will either of the invaders or the invaded. He may present motives (not of compulsion, but persuasion,) to encourage virtuous resolutions, and prevent the

execution of vicious ones; and leave the will uncontrolled in its choice, and the principle of virtue and vice unaffected. If I direct the hand of a benevolent man to fit objects of his charity, his virtue is surely not extinguished by being assisted. If a father gives his son lessons of virtue, and lays before him motives proper to influence his choice, the one has merit in listening to instruction, as well as the other in giving it. Why then should the nature of virtue and vice be any more affected by the invisible motions of Providence, than by the more open and visible operations of man.

But I have yet another exception to this passage. "If, says he, "things are so directed, that prosperity and adversity in this world bear some proportion to men's virtues and vices, a future retribution is of necessity superseded." No, surely; not unless they bear an exact and equitable proportion. Philosophers have told us, and common sense and experience tell us, that happiness and misery in this life will in the nature of things tally with in some degree, and bear some proportion to men's virtues and vices; but will this too destroy the notion of a state of probation, and render a future state quite unnecessary? His conclusion, I fear, will reach much farther than he intended to carry it.

But see how the conclusion will stand with the notion of a Providence. If God visits a nation with war or pestilence for its vices and corruptions, is this such a punishment of sin as leaves no room for future retribution? Are not the innocent and the guilty, and the guilty in different degrees, equally involved in all calamities that are general and national? And does this supersede, or does it not rather infer the necessity of a future and more equitable judgment? All states and conditions of life have their several duties relative to them, and in the discharge of these duties the trial of men's virtues consists. Prosperity is a trial to one man, and adversity to another; and they are both in their turns sometimes a trial to the same man; and they are equally a foundation of trial, whether they are occasioned by the hand of God or the hand of man. Providence therefore neither destroys the notion of a probation in this life, nor supersedes the necessity of another.

But what after all is Mr. Chubb's notion of Providence?

or has he any notion of it distinct from the general laws of nature? If he has, and a more rational one than divines or philosophers have as yet been able to frame, why does he not explain it for the benefit of mankind? If he has not, let him speak out; and we shall know in what company to rank him.

The idea of a Providence is not that of an indolent, unactive nature, that (like the gods of Epicurus) sits at ease, an idle spectator of his own creation; but an active and a vigilant one, that overlooks and directs, governs and controls. This is not a Jewish or a Christian doctrine, but the general belief of all ages and nations; not a prejudice ot the superstitious vulgar, but the sober judgment of the reasoning philosopher. There are, it is true, in antiquity some exceptions to this universality; but you find them only amongst a set of men that denied first principles; I mean the atheistic sects. A spirit of scepticism, under whatever plausible name it appears, is of all things the most dangerous to truth. How far Mr. Chubb has already been carried by it, or where it will end, I take not on me to determine. He has neither given an honest representation of the common notion of a Providence, nor thought proper to explain his own; and there I shall leave him till he does.

God gave him parts and knowlege beyond what might have been expected from his life and education, if they are truly reported; and I am sorry to think he has made no better use of them. If the itch of writing be so prevalent in him, and his love of truth and of mankind be real and not pretended, why does he not employ his thoughts and pen in explaining and defending our common religion, the religion of nature, of which I doubt not but he is capable; and not waste his time and talents in abusing Scripture, which it is very evident he does not, and many parts of which he cannot understand?

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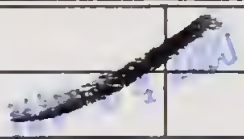

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